

ANGLO-MARATHA  
RELATIONS AND MALCOLM  
1798-1830

U. N. Chakravorty



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## Preface

IN THE following pages an attempt has been made to trace in detail the significant role of Sir John Malcolm in the Maratha affairs from 1798 to 1819. This period constitutes one of clash between the expanding British Empire and waning Maratha Empire. During these momentous years the British outplayed the Marathas both in war and diplomacy. In these political developments Sir John Malcolm played a vital role which clearly shows that persons holding subordinate ranks under the Governors-General often acted as a forceful instrument in the formulation and execution of the policies of the East India Company.

Grant Duff's monumental work refers incidentally to the activities of Malcolm in Maratha affairs while Kaye's two volumes—*Life and Correspondence of Sir John Malcolm*—provide a valuable outline for an intensive study of this hitherto neglected aspect of Anglo-Maratha diplomacy. As Malcolm's pivotal role in Anglo-Maratha diplomacy during its final phase has not been studied previously it is necessary to explore this virgin field.

The present work embodies new findings on the stormy political scenes in the Maratha Empire. Malcolm's sagacious views on the political condition of Indian States provided materials for Lord Wellesley's diplomatic net. All Maratha rulers who fell into this net have been studied in the present volume. The struggle between Sindhia and Holkar for primacy in Poona politics has been discussed. John Malcolm was not a docile tool of the Governor-General. I have attempted for the first time to describe Malcolm's sympathetic views on Daulatrao Sindhia even after his discomfiture, and to analyse his controversy with Lord Wellesley on the vital question of the restoration of Gwalior and Gohad to Sindhia. Yashwantrao Holkar made an abortive attempt to form an anti-British front in 1805, which has been brushed aside by scholars as a political move of no importance. British and Indian historians have depicted him in an unfavourable light. In the present work I have attempted to make a reassessment of his plan to unite the Maratha leaders in the hour of crisis by emphasizing time and again the need to defend *Swaraj* and *Swadharma*. Malcolm's views on Yashwantrao Holkar, the British

conflict with the latter and his successors, and his onerous task in reorganizing Holkar's territories, have been analysed with minute care in the light of fresh evidences available both in English and Marathi. Apart from these central figures of Maratha history, the affairs of the Southern Rajas and Jagirdars as also the liquidation of the Pindari menace have been studied in the context of the overall crisis of the Maratha Empire. Malcolm's suggestion to the Governor-General for combating this menace by isolating these marauders from Sindhia and Holkar have been focussed for the first time. Bajirao II's flight and negotiations with Malcolm and the latter's difference with Lord Hastings for a grant of generous pension to the dejected and crest-fallen Peshwa have been brought to lurid light.

An adept in the art of diplomacy, Malcolm was commissioned to do various jobs for furtherance of British interests. As Agent for Central India and Governor of Bombay, Malcolm not only proved his administrative ability but also compiled interesting accounts of Maratha institutions like Judiciary, Panchayats, Police and Revenue systems as also economic conditions (trade and commerce). I have tried to co-relate Malcolm's views with the observations of contemporary British officials, adding a broad perspective to the outlook of a gifted individual. In his long and eventful career in India—from acting as a commander of the British forces against the Marathas to his role as peacemaker with the latter—Malcolm displayed his political acumen which sometimes clashed with British interests. The earlier phase, buried in a mass of unpublished papers, has received a perfunctory treatment from the scholars in comparison with his latter activities. But I have given it special attention, believing that Malcolm's rudimentary training in politics and diplomacy served as the foundation of his future success and notable contribution to the fall of the Maratha power. To draw integrated picture of Malcolm in the broad canvas of Maratha history materials have been drawn from all available Marathi sources as also unpublished documents in English preserved in National Archives of India (New Delhi), Secretariat Record Office (Bombay), British Museum and Cleveland Public Library. It is hoped that the narrative is a complete, up-to-date and critical survey of a crucial stage in the political development of modern India.

The present work would not have seen the light of the day but for the help and guidance which I received from my teacher and guide, Dr. Sailendra Nath Sen, M.A., Ph.D., D. Litt., Reader in History, University of Calcutta. To him my obligations are many but words of gratitude are few. In this connection I also take the



opportunity of expressing my heart-felt gratitude to my old teacher, Prof. A.C. Banerjee, M.A., P.R.S., Ph.D., Ex-Centenary Professor of International Relations, Calcutta University, and Retired Guru Nanak Professor of History, Jadavpur University, Calcutta, for his suggestion to improve the quality of the thesis. Old age and physical afflictions could never wane his affection to an unknown and obscure ex-student like me. I am also grateful to my another teacher, Professor Amalek Tripathi, M.A. (Cal.) A.M. (Columbia); Ph.D. (London) Ashutosh Professor of Medieval & Modern Indian History, University of Calcutta, for his constructive criticism of the thesis. Mr. C.L. Deshpande of National Library deserves credit for helping me to get into translated the Maratha materials into English. Sri Dipankar Chakravorty, B.Com., LL.B., deserves appreciation for undertaking the monotonous task of type-copying the entire work.

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# Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Contents</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Abbreviations</i>	<i>x</i>
Introduction: John Malcom's Political Career in India	1
I The Maratha States, 1798-1802	10
II Second Maratha War and its Aftermath	26
III Gohad and Gwalior	44
IV Treaties of Mustafapur and Rajghat	63
V The Pindari War	90
VI Bajirao's Surrender	107
VII Treaty of Mandasor	126
VIII Nagpur Affairs	137
IX Fall of Asirgarh	144
X Malcolm on the Marathas	152
XI Conclusion	170
Appendix A: Important Personalities	178
Appendix B: Glossary	180
Bibliography	183
Index	189

## Abbreviations

1. B.M. Add. MSS. : British Museum Additional Manuscripts.
2. For. Pol. Cons. : Foreign Political Consultations.
3. For. Pol. Procgs. : Foreign Political Proceedings.
4. For. Misc. : Foreign Miscellaneous.
5. For. Sec. Cons. : Foreign Secret Consultations.
6. For. Sec. Procgs. : Foreign Secret Proceedings.
7. Khare : *Aitihasik Lekha Sangraha*.
8. Pol. Dept. Diary : Political Department Diary.
9. P.R.C. : Poona Residency Correspondence.
10. Rajwade : *Marathaynchi Itihasachen Sadhanen*.
11. Sec. and Pol. Dept. Diary : Secret and Political Department Diary.
12. S. R. : Selection of papers from the records at East India Company.
13. S.R. and P.D. : Selections from the Satara Rajas' and Peshwas' Diaries.

To the Memory of  
My Father  
Suresh Chandra Chakravorty  
M.A., B.T.



## Introduction

### John Malcolm's Political Career in India

JOHN MALCOLM was born on May 2, 1769, at Burnfoot in the younger branch of Malcolms of Langholm in Dumfries-shire. At the age of twelve he left the Westerkirk Parish School when his maternal uncle John Pasley took him to London, with a view to placing him in the East India Company's service. Being a prosperous merchant it was not difficult for John Pasley to procure for his nephew a nomination. John Malcolm was called for an interview in 1781 before the Court of Directors. The interview was an interesting scene. The Directors to avoid him asked, "My little man, what would you do if you went to meet Hyder Ali?" "Do?" said the little boy. "Why? Sir, I would be out with my sword and cut off his head".<sup>1</sup> This prompt reply pleased the Directors and the latter selected him at once for military service in India.

John Malcolm landed at Madras in April 1783. He was an *Ensign* in the East India Company's military service. In 1792 he accompanied Lord Cornwallis, who was leading the British forces against Tipu Sultan. Malcolm was appointed interpreter to the Nizam's troops. In 1794 he left for England and stayed there for a year.

In 1796 he returned to India. He held the post of *Lieutenant* in the Company's military service. In 1796 Malcolm was appointed Secretary to Commander-in-Chief, Sir Alured Clarke. When Clarke was replaced by Lord Harris as Commander-in-Chief, he was re-appointed Secretary. For a short period he held the "profitable appointment of Town-Major of Fort St. George"<sup>2</sup> In 1798 Malcolm was appointed Assistant Resident at Hyderabad. In the Fourth Anglo-Mysore war he commanded the troops of the Nizam and took an active part with Arthur Wellesley at the siege of Seringapattam. He acted there as the "Controlling Officer". After the war he was appointed Secretary to the commission for the settlement of Mysore.<sup>3</sup> His services were highly commended both by Arthur Wellesley and the Governor-General.

About this time Lord Wellesley was contemplating sending a mission to Persia. His objects in sending the mission were: to induce

Persia to divert the attention of the Afghans, who constantly menaced North-West India, to check French influence, and to promote British trade in the Persian Gulf. He selected John Malcolm for the mission.

Malcolm sailed from Bombay on December 29, 1799, and reached Bushire in February 1800. He was then conducted to Ispahan. From there he proceeded to Teheran where on November 16, 1800, he met the Shah of Persia. He opened negotiations with Haji Ibrahim Khan, the Prime Minister, with whom he concluded two treaties, commercial and political, on January 28, 1801. The commercial treaty provided for unrestricted trade and the cession to the East India Company of the islands of Kishm, Anjan and Kharg in the Persian Gulf, and the right to establish factories on the coast or in the interior of Persia. The political treaty promised to help the Shah in curbing the anticipated aggressions of Zaman Shah of Kabul. The Shah also pledged to exclude the French from Persia. The British Government in India would help him with ships, troops and stores in the event of a French invasion. Though the treaties were not executed by the respective Governments, Malcolm's mission produced salutary impression on the Persian Court and secured political and commercial advantages for the Company.

John Malcolm returned to Bombay on May 13, 1801. On his arrival he was summoned to Calcutta where he was appointed Private Secretary (July 1801) to the Governor-General. In August he accompanied Lord Wellesley, who was on his tour of investigation into affairs of Oudh. In December 1801, the Governor-General sent him on a "confidential mission" to Madras to induce Edward Clive, Governor of Madras, and other officials not to leave India.<sup>4</sup> The Governor-General apprehended that a change of official hierarchy in Madras might jeopardize the application of the revenue and judicial regulations. He completed the task with fidelity. In August 1802 Haji Kahl Khan, the Persian Ambassador, was murdered on the street at Bombay by some British sepoys. The Governor-General asked his Private Secretary to visit Bombay to afford "aid" and "assistance" to the "remaining members of the embassy"<sup>5</sup> and to "console them" for the losses which they had sustained.

Malcolm travelled by way of Hyderabad and Poona. He discussed with the Residents the political "changes" that might take place between the Nizam and the Peshwa. Between Poona and Bombay he was detained at Bhore-Ghat for a couple of days as a prisoner by a local chief, in anticipation of an immediate conflict between Sindhia and Holkar. On October 10, 1802, he reached



Bombay. He settled the business satisfactorily. He despatched conciliatory letters to the Shah of Persia through Lieutenant Charles William Pasley, the acting Resident at Bushire. His letters produced the desired effect; the Shah was easily appeased for the murder of his Ambassador on the receipt of a substantial indemnity.

On February 3, 1803, Malcolm was appointed Resident at Mysore. At the request of Arthur Wellesley, who was entrusted with the task of the restoration of the Peshwa, he accompanied him to Poona. With the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Maratha war he was commissioned to act as Political Officer to Arthur Wellesley. Malcolm's frequent physical affliction prevented him from taking part in the battle. In September 1803 he came round. In the middle of December 1803 he arrived at the camp and took an active part in the peace parleys that had been going on between Sindhia's ministers and Arthur Wellesley. He drew the Treaty of Surji Anjangaon on December 30, 1803. When Daulatrao Sindhia made overtures for a defensive alliance, Arthur Wellesley despatched him to Sindhia's camp at Burhanpur, where on February 27, 1804, he signed the treaty. Both Arthur Wellesley and the Governor-General in Council congratulated him on the conclusion of the treaty. He was asked to work as Resident at Sindhia's *darbar* till the arrival of his successor Joseph Webbe, who relieved him of the duty in April 1804.

He returned to his old post, i.e. Resident at Mysore, a post which he had retained during the time of his negotiations at Sindhia's court, though the duties were performed by his deputy. In March 1805 Lord Wellesley summoned him to Calcutta and asked him to proceed to the camp of Lord Lake. He was with Lord Lake till the end of the year. On November 23, 1805, he made the Treaty of Mustafapur with Daulatrao Sindhia. When Yashwantrao surrendered to the British Government, Malcolm on December 24, 1805, concluded the Treaty of Rajghat with Holkar's representatives.

In 1808 a mission under General Gardane from the French Emperor, Napoleon, arrived at the court of Persia with the object of establishing a connection which might facilitate his task of attacking the British in India. The French and Russians had established their spheres of influence in Persia. The Governor-General felt alarmed and decided to send an officer of rank, vested with full powers, to Persia. He selected John Malcolm, who was then Resident at Mysore, for a mission to Persia. There was difficulty in obtaining the sanction of the Court of Directors to this appointment. Malcolm had been criticized for having been extravagant on his former mission. Moreover they did not like him for his commitment to the

policy of the "Wellesley School". The Home Government, therefore, appointed instead Sir Harford Jones as Ambassador to Persia.<sup>6</sup> The Government of India, though snubbed, decided to send a "commission of observation", headed by Malcolm, to the Persian Gulf. In June 1808 Malcolm reached Bushire and from there went to Teheran. But he found it extremely difficult to overcome the French influence which predominated there.<sup>7</sup> The members of his mission were not allowed to proceed beyond Shiraz, and he was referred to the provincial Viceroy of Fars. He failed to gain anything which could further the interests of his country and nation. He left Persia and reached Calcutta on August 22, 1808. He resumed his old diplomatic assignment as Resident at Mysore.

In 1808 the officers in the Madras army mutinied. The Quarter Master-General on the recommendation of the Directors had submitted a report in which he made some derogatory remarks against the officers for drawing the double allowances in the field and in the cantonments. They took it as "aspersions on their character as officers and gentlemen".<sup>8</sup> At Masulipatam they imprisoned Colonel Jones Innes, their "Commanding Officer" and seized the fort. The officers at Hyderabad also revolted. The Madras officers were contemplating to march on Hyderabad to join their comrades. The Governor-General deputed John Malcolm to deal with this extremely delicate situation. Malcolm not only delivered Colonel Innes from the garrison but also convened a meeting with the mutineers. With patience and forbearance he reasoned with them and asked them to give up their contemplated march to Hyderabad. His principal object was to gain time and in this he succeeded. He was replaced by General Peter. George Barlow, Governor of Madras (1807-12), did not approve his proceedings.

Lord Minto decided again to despatch a mission to Persia in 1809 under the leadership of Malcolm. He left Bombay on January 10, 1810. During this journey he began to write his memorable work *History of Persia*. After reaching Persia he found himself in an embarrassing position. The situation became too hot for him when Sir Harford Jones, the Home Government's Ambassador, refused to cooperate with him and instead created difficulties. Jones had been appointed by the superior authority, so he did not attach any importance to the mission of the Governor-General. Despite the Ambassador's apparent neglect Malcolm had been received with "warmth" by the Shah of Persia.<sup>9</sup> In the meantime the Home Government decided to keep diplomatic relations with Persia in its own hands. Malcolm felt disappointed and returned. In 1812 he left for England.

Malcolm returned to India on March 17, 1817. The Governor-General, the Earl of Moira, wanted to utilize Malcolm's "talents and energy" in the Pindari war. He was appointed Political Agent to the Governor-General and Commander of the third division of the Deccan army.<sup>10</sup> To apprise the Indian States of the British Government's firm determination to exterminate the Pindaris Malcolm paid diplomatic visits to Mysore, Hyderabad and Poona. The preparations of the British Government made the Maratha chiefs apprehensive of their future. They ultimately resorted to arms and this led to the outbreak of the third Maratha war. Malcolm was in pursuit of Chitu Khan, the Pindari leader, who proceeded towards Ujjain. The British forces saw that the Marathas were ready to attack them. Malcolm led the British forces at the battlefield of Mahitpur on December 21, 1817. Holkar's forces were defeated and the Maratha chief was compelled to sign the Treaty of Mandasor. In dictating the terms Malcolm displayed "ability, energy and judgment"<sup>11</sup> and his work was appreciated by the Governor-General.

Bajirao II, the last Peshwa, found it hard to sustain himself when the British forces pressed him from all sides. When he threw himself on the mercy of John Malcolm the latter forced him to accept a pension and to give up all claim and title to the office of the Peshwa.<sup>12</sup>

The Killedar of Asirgarh provoked the Company's troops who were skirting the fort to intercept Bajirao. Yashwantrao Bhao was asked to hand over the fort to the British officers like Deveton and Malcolm. But on Bhao's refusal to surrender Malcolm besieged the fortress and took possession of it on April 9, 1819.

At the close of the Pindari and third Maratha war the States of Malwa acknowledged the British supremacy. The settlement of the province, which came to be known as the Central India Agency, was entrusted to Malcolm, who rendered invaluable service and remained there until May 1822.

There were numerous States in Malwa which for nearly last fifty years were oppressed, pillaged by the Pindaris, Marathas, *Bhils* and *Grassiahs*. Before the introduction of the British rule in the province the smaller States were found under "tributary obligations to Sindhia, Holkar or the Pawar chiefs of Dhar and Dewas." The policy pursued by Malcolm was to declare the "permanency of the rights existing at the time of British occupancy on condition of the maintenance of order." He deprived the stronger powers (Sindhia and Holkar) of "all pretext for interference"<sup>13</sup> in the affairs of the

smaller States and induced the plundering chiefs to pursue peaceful life. The small independent chiefs like the Rajas of Dhar and Dewas were allowed to retain their "independence" as this was *sine qua non* to ensure the tranquillity of the country. Accordingly Malcolm concluded treaties with them. The treaty with the Raja of Dhar was signed on January 10, 1819, and contained the usual stipulations of "perpetual peace, friendship and unity of interests" between the two Governments. The Raja also promised to "act in subordinate cooperation with the British Government, and to have no intercourse or alliance, private or public, with any other State, but secretly and openly to be the friend and ally of the British Government; and at all times when that Government shall require the Rajah of Dhar shall furnish troops in proportion to his ability."<sup>14</sup> His tributary rights over the Rajput States of Banswara and Dungarpur were ceded to the Company. The British Government pledged to protect Dhar against its enemies.

Another treaty was concluded with Tukoji and Anandrao, the Joint Rajas of Dewas, on December 12, 1818. The same relation of "subordination" and "protection" on both sides was guaranteed. The British Government "engaged to the Rajas of Dewas, 'to give no protection to any of their discontented relations or dependents and not to interfere in the internal administration of the country.'"<sup>15</sup>

The British Government created a new small State in Malwa in 1818, by guaranteeing to Ghafur Khan, the brother-in-law of Amir Khan, the independent possession of the territories which he held in *jagir* from Holkar. He was freed from the tutelage of Holkar and became the first Nawab of Jaora. The creation of two Muslim States of Tonk and Jaora was intended to "counterpoise" the predominant Hindu influence in Central India.

Besides making political alliances with these territories, Malcolm inquired into and defined the position, powers and claims of a large number of small chiefs and Rajput Sardars. He separated them from the sovereigns to whom they were bound by ties of tribute or allegiance or both. Malcolm acted as mediator and settled the terms of "guarantee" and "protection". The smaller Rajput States like Ratlam, Sailana and Sitamau were tributary States under Sindhia. Through British mediation their tribute to Sindhia was fixed and Sindhia had also to pledge not to interfere in their affairs of administration. As the maintenance of the public tranquillity was his avowed object, Malcolm instructed his officers to make least intervention in their "internal administration."<sup>16</sup> All these measures brought about peace, tranquillity and prosperity within five years.

More than two-thirds of the deserted villages were restored and repeople by 1820.

The Governor-General in his despatch to the Court of Directors wrote: "It is to the intelligence and judicious course of measures conducted by Sir John Malcolm, as well as to the activities and zeal of the officers employed under his orders, that we mainly ascribe so favourable and honourable a rise of our interposition in that quarter."<sup>17</sup> Though his services were highly eulogized by Lord Hastings, the Court of Directors did not reward him for his remarkable work. He expected that the administration of Central India would be placed under a Lieutenant-Governor, and he would be rewarded with the post, but the Court of Directors refused to countenance such a step. He was disappointed when he saw that Elphinstone was made Governor of Bombay and Sir Thomas Munro that of Madras in 1820. He resigned and left for England in 1822.

Malcolm came to India for the last time when he was appointed Governor of Bombay in 1827. His Governorship was marked by a dispute with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Bombay. The Supreme Court asserted its jurisdiction beyond the limits of the island and factories of Bombay and issued a writ of *Habeas Corpus* in Moro Raghunath's case against Pandurang Ram Chandra, "a privileged Sardar" under the Government of Bombay. Ram Chandra was supported by the Bombay Government. Malcolm considered the writ would impunge the authority of the Company. He wrote a letter of protest, signed by himself and all members of the Council. The Bombay Government ordered not to hand over Ramchandra to the Court. On the death of two other judges, Sir John Grant was made the sole judge. He lost his temper when the Governor-in-Council gave protection to Ramchandra. In February 1829 he issued a writ of attachment against Pandurang Ramchandra and asked the Governor-in-Council to execute it. The Governor declined to implement the court order. When John Grant, by way of protest, closed the court, the Governor by a proclamation on April 7, 1829, announced a new judge to be appointed. The Home Government resolved the crisis by appointing two judges, who subscribed neither to Grant's views nor to the Governor's discretion.

During his Governorship Malcolm was principally occupied in continuing Elphinstone's policy of retrenchment in the Government services. He encouraged steam navigation with Egypt.

Malcolm was sympathetic to the Indians. He patronized men of humble origin and held that for their birth they should not be excluded from the Government service. He was "particularly

anxious" to have trained teachers installed in the "principal towns" because he wanted the new education to be "brought nearer to natives of rank and consideration" in the British provinces.<sup>18</sup> He held a high opinion on the quality of Indians serving in the revenue department. But before his departure he had to change his opinion and remarked more in sorrow than in anger that "natives of high rank" did not show their eagerness for service in the revenue department. On December 5, he left India for good.

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## CHAPTER I

# The Maratha States, 1798-1802

JOHN MALCOLM, who was destined to play an important role in the Company's political fortunes in India for several decades, arrived at Madras in April 1783 when he was only fourteen years old. He began his amazing career as an *Ensign* to escort the English prisoners—who had been arrested in the Second Anglo-Mysore war—to a place of safety. Tipu Sultan surrendered the prisoners according to the terms of the Treaty of Mangalore (March 11, 1784). The treaty was a patchwork of compromise and did not last long. In 1790 war broke out again and Malcolm was ordered to join the Nizam's troops, who were cooperating with the British forces against Tipu. In the Nizam's camp Malcolm came in contact with diplomats like John Kennaway and Graeme Mercer which actuated him to be a diplomat<sup>1</sup> and roused his interest in Maratha affairs. Knowledge of Persian language was necessary for a diplomat in those days, as it was the language of inter-State communication in India. Malcolm expressed his desire to John Kennaway to learn the Persian language. Kennaway, the Resident at Hyderabad, out of fancy for Malcolm, lent the service of his *Munshi*. Malcolm began to study the Persian language earnestly and within three months he acquired a good working knowledge of the language. The learning of Persian enabled him to get employment in the political department. The opportunity came in 1792 when an interpreter to the Nizam's court was required. Malcolm applied for the post and got it. This was the beginning of John Malcolm's political career in India. In 1794 he left for England.

In 1796 Malcolm returned to India. He was appointed Military Secretary and interpreter to General Clarke, the Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army. He retained this office under General Clarke's successor, General Harris. During this period he wrote several papers on Indian States and their relations with the British Government. Malcolm had to work hard in drawing up these papers.

In these papers Malcolm's vigilant eyes noted with concern the intrigues of the French and their influence in the courts of Tipu Sultan, Daulatrao Sindhia and the Nizam. The French promised



Tipu Sultan "immediate cooperation of a large force" in his struggle against the British.<sup>2</sup> Tipu had a large force in his dominion, trained and marshalled by the French Commanders. In Daulatrao Sindhia's army there were French generals like Perron, the worthy successor of De Boigne. They were given *jagirs* for their maintenance. The Nizam, after his defeat at the battle of Kharda (1795) by the combined Maratha forces, became annoyed at the neutralist stance of the Company, dismissed the English troops and freely admitted Frenchmen into his court and army. The Raja of Berar was "averse to the English" and he looked with jealousy their rise and progress.<sup>3</sup> Oudh was also in a state of political ferment and its new ruler Sadat Ali, propped up with the British help, had to look forward to the British Government to "protect him in the exercise of the power."<sup>4</sup> The Carnatic, already subservient to the Company, presented a gloomy picture. Its ruler Umdut-ul-Umrah had become irritated when attempts were made to induce him to accept a modification of the treaty (July 12, 1792) which was concluded at the time of Lord Cornwallis.

Lord Mornington, better known as Lord Wellesley, was appointed Governor-General of India in 1797. As a Commissioner of the Board of Control he was acquainted with the affairs of India. On his way to India he met Major W. Kirkpatrick at the Cape of Good Hope, where he had a discussion with him on Indian affairs. Lord Wellesley landed at Madras on April 26, 1798, and reached Calcutta on May 17. While at Madras, John Malcolm apprised the new Governor-General of the political condition of India. Wellesley was so much pleased that when an assistant to the Resident at Hyderabad was required, he rewarded Malcolm with the post. In offering this appointment, Wellesley was "governed by no other motive" than by the "zeal, activity and diligence" with which Malcolm studied the "native languages and political system of India".<sup>5</sup>

Soon after his arrival the Governor-General found that the Company was exposed to grave dangers as a result of his predecessor's non-intervention policy. The situation, according to him, was, "extremely critical", as Tipu had improved his resources, and the Nizam had welcomed the French support. Daulatrao Sindhia "had arrived at a most alarming eminence". Moreover there was lurking danger of an invasion of India by Zaman Shah of Kabul as well as by Napoleon who had undertaken an expedition to Egypt.<sup>6</sup>

Fully aware of the political crises that enveloped him, Wellesley was determined to extricate the Company from the morass of trouble and to make it the paramount power in India. He gave up John Shore's inert policy of non-intervention and introduced in its place

an active system of Subsidiary Alliance. A brief review of British policy of non-intervention from 1785-1797 would not be out of place to understand the spirited foreign policy which Wellesley inaugurated immediately after his arrival in India.

Pitt's India Act of 1784 enjoined the East India Company to follow a policy of non-intervention in Indian politics as far as possible. The Act instructed its servants in India that further conquests would be "repugnant to the wish, the honour and the policy of the British nation." Lord Cornwallis tried to follow the injunctions of the said Act; but he soon came to realize that it was not possible to adhere strictly to that policy of non-intervention. He wrote to Malet on February 28, 1790, that it was "attended with the unavoidable inconvenience of our (the Company's) being constantly exposed to the necessity of commencing a war without having previously secured the assistance "of efficient allies."<sup>7</sup> He thought that the Anglo-French hostility in Europe was bound to have its repercussions in India and a war with Tipu was inevitable, as the latter had allied himself with the French.

Lord Cornwallis gave up the policy of neutrality when he provoked Tipu to attack the territory of Travancore on December 29, 1789. The Raja of Travancore was an old ally of the Company. The Governor-General formed on June 1, 1790, a triple alliance consisting of the Company, the Peshwa and the Nizam against Tipu. Tipu's territory was attacked from two sides—east and west. In the initial stage Tipu succeeded in compelling Medows to fall back upon Madras. Then Cornwallis himself led the army. He along with Medows in a lightning movement occupied Bangalore on March 21, 1791, and proceeded towards Seringapattam. Tipu also fought with equal fortitude. But the Mysore ruler thought it wise to surrender. In February 1792 a treaty was signed known as the Treaty of Seringapattam. Tipu ceded half of his dominions like Calicut, Coorg and Baramahal and paid three crores of rupees as compensation. Lord Cornwallis had been compelled by circumstances to give up the policy of non-intervention, and this deviation from the system favoured in London gave him a good dividend. But the fact remains that the third Anglo-Mysore war would most probably have had a different result if the cooperation of the Peshwa and the Nizam had not been secured by the British.

Sir John Shore pursued strictly the policy of non-intervention. For political as well as financial reasons, Shore did not think it prudent to risk war with the Marathas in favour of a weak ally. The Maratha-Mysore war and the Anglo-Mysore war had strained the

Company's finances to its limits. Another war would have completely disrupted the Company's economy. Shore refused to send help to the Nizam when his territory was attacked by the Maratha leaders like the Peshwa, Daulatrao Sindhia, Tukoji Holkar and the Raja of Berar. As a result the Nizam was defeated at the battle of Kharda in March 1795. The Governor-General denied help on the plea that he was precluded from such intervention by clause 34 of Pitt's India Act. Moreover, the Marathas were then at peace with the English, who were not bound by any previous agreement to help the Nizam against a friendly power. The Nizam in utter disgust dismissed his English troops and freely admitted Frenchmen into his court and army. So this policy of non-intervention led to the preponderance of French influence at the Nizam's court.

Lord Wellesley abandoned this cautious policy of non-intervention and introduced in its place a vigorous system of Subsidiary Alliance that would enable the British Government to establish its primacy over the Indian States. His policy of Subsidiary Alliance meant: (1) No Indian power in alliance with the Company should make any war or carry on any negotiations with any State whatsoever. (2) The big Indian States in such alliance were to maintain a force commanded by British Officers for the preservation of the public peace and they were to cede in return certain territories to meet the yearly charges of this force. (3) The small Indian States in such alliance were to pay a tribute to the paramount power. (4) In return, the British Government was to protect them against external or internal danger. This was the keynote of Lord Wellesley's policy in India. It requires no stretch of imagination that only a weak power would agree to this proposal as it would amount to the loss of the sovereignty and independence of the State. When offered, the Nizam, the weakest of all the Indian Powers, accepted the proposal. The Nizam disbanded his French Officers, replacing them by the British. This easy victory emboldened Wellesley to cast his net wide.

Tipu was an anathema to Wellesley. He found a pretext when the ruler of Mysore began to make brisk military preparations. It was impossible for the Governor-General to wait longer so as to give Tipu time to strengthen his contact with the French.

The war compelled Wellesley to regulate and define his relations with the Nizam and the Marathas, the Company's former allies. He asked the Peshwa to join but the latter refused. The Nizam was to reorganize his troops. Malcolm was appointed Commander over the troops of the Nizam that were to cooperate

with the British in the military operations against Tipu.<sup>8</sup> But the accomplishment of the task needed the disbandment of the French corps. As anticipated they mutinied and seized the officers. They did not spare even Malcolm, who escaped death, thanks to the deserters from his old regiment, who formed the disbanded corps. In quelling the disturbance Malcolm earned the admiration of the Nizam's officers.

War was declared against Tipu in February 1799. Malcolm joined the Nizam's contingent and acted as the controlling officer. In the war he attended on behalf of the King's "Thirty-third" regiment and marched upon Seringapattam with Arthur Wellesley, who was asked to command the British forces.<sup>9</sup> On May 4, Seringapattam, Tipu's capital, was stormed. Tipu was killed, while fighting in the battle. After the defeat and death of Tipu, Malcolm was appointed Secretary to the "Commission" for the settlement of the Mysore Government.<sup>10</sup> He did the work satisfactorily and earned the plaudits of the Governor-General.

While the British power was showing signs of vitality in the early years of the nineteenth century, the only power that could affect the destiny of the British was the Marathas. Though still considered formidable in the Indian body-politic, the Maratha States presented a distressing picture, betraying all the symptoms of weakness that could afflict a nation. The States were ruled by the Peshwa at Poona, Sindhia at Ujjain, Holkar at Indore, Bhonsle at Nagpur, Gaikwad at Baroda. The States were members of the Maratha Confederacy, a loose organization existing in name only with no effective control over them. The Peshwa was the nominal head of the "Confederacy". At that time he was the weakest of the five rulers.<sup>11</sup> His authority in all questions of importance was not only disregarded but opposed, unless his decision would suit the particular interests of others.

The Maratha dominion at that time was 970 miles in length, *i.e.*, from Delhi in the north to the river Tungabhadra in the south. In breadth it was 900 miles from the east to west which extended from the Bay of Bengal to the Gulf of Cambay. The far-flung Maratha empire required a strong cementing force. But that vital element was lacking and internal dissensions which ruined the Maratha States reached a critical phase when Peshwa Savai Madhavrao died childless on October 27, 1795. There began conflicts between the Ministers and the Sardars (Maratha chiefs).<sup>12</sup> The question of succession posed problems. The late Peshwa had left no issue. Madhavrao's uncle, Raghunathrao, had two sons,

Bajirao and Chimnaji, and an adopted son, Amritrao. They were the surviving members of the Peshwa's family. This gave Daulatrao Sindhia, a lad of fourteen, who had inherited control of the powerful army established by late Mahadji Sindhia, an opportunity to establish his control in Maratha politics. With this object in view he supported Bajirao's cause. On the other hand, Nana Phadnavis, the late Peshwa's powerful Minister, was determined to keep Bajirao out of the inheritance as he apprehended that Bajirao would destroy his influence on becoming the Peshwa. Nana was even afraid of his life and personal freedom as he had incurred Bajirao's displeasure when the latter was put in prison at Junnar. Nana, therefore, began to make secret plans. He visited the Nizam's Minister, Azim-ul-Umrah, who was then a prisoner of the Marathas. He distributed money lavishly to seduce Sindhia's army and officials. Being afraid of Sindhia's approach he made preparations for leaving Poona. He sent the women of his family to the hill-fort of Raigarh and himself sought the British protection in a village under the Government of Fort Victoria. But Nana's activities did not stop there. He soon opened secret negotiations with Bajirao. In the meeting a compromise was effected by which Bajirao would be the Peshwa and Nana would be the Minister. This arrangement, however, did not improve the situation. It rather accentuated the crisis. Daulatrao Sindhia felt irritated when he saw that this settlement was made without his knowledge.<sup>13</sup> He immediately with a large body of horse and foot proceeded and surrounded Bajirao's tent. On April 17, 1796, he opened negotiations with him. Bajirao had to agree to the conditions laid by him. He pledged to exclude Nana from all affairs of the administration. Bajirao did not derive any benefit out of it. In order to get rid of Nana he placed himself in the hands of Daulatrao Sindhia. This alliance only added troubles to the empire.

This arrangement was not to the liking of Nana, who became critically alarmed and moved heaven and earth to consolidate his position. He reached the village of Mahad and took all possible care to defend the fort of Raigarh. He not only collected a force of 1,200 horse and 5,000 foot, but also succeeded in enlisting the support of Tukoji Holkar, Baba Phadke and Raghuji Bhonsle and others.<sup>14</sup> However, "after a period of confusion, suspicion, and intrigues prevailing at Poona between the various parties" Bajirao was vested with the robes of the Peshwa on December 4, 1796.<sup>15</sup>

Saddled with political power Bajirao took steps to reinforce his position as he was not prepared to tolerate the high-handedness of his Minister. With Sindhia's help, the Peshwa wanted to destroy

Nana's influence and planned to arrest him. Nana was not impervious to these danger signals. For his safety he demanded that the Peshwa should not transact any business without his consent and Sindhia's troops should be removed from Poona. It was Nana's wish that Sindhia should go to Hindustan.<sup>16</sup>

Nana's position was further weakened when his supporter Tukoji Holkar died on August 15, 1797. Tukoji left two sons, Kashirao and Malharrao, and two illegitimate sons, Vithoji and Yashwantrao. Kashirao, though eldest, was imbecile. But Malharrao was able and efficient.<sup>17</sup> The relation between two brothers was far from friendly. Two parties were formed, each trying to gain mastery over *Holkar Shahi*.<sup>18</sup> Kashirao got the support from the Peshwa and Sindhia. The other party, led by Malharrao and assisted by his step-brothers, had managed to obtain the blessing of Nana Phadnavis. In supporting Kashirao the Peshwa-Sindhia party had two objects; first, they wanted to oust Nana from power, and secondly, Daulatrao saw in this game an opportunity of acquiring some territories of Holkar which were adjacent to his border. The Holkar brothers were then at Poona. In the early morning of September 14, 1797, Sindhia made a sudden attack on Malharrao's camp and killed him. Kashirao now became chief of the Holkar family with Sindhia's support. But he had to pay a heavy price for it. He sacrificed the interest of his State to Sindhia's power and authority in such a way which may be compared to "a death tie to Holkar family and State."<sup>19</sup>

Yashwantrao Holkar resolved to avenge the wrong. Along with his elder brother Vithoji he left Poona and went to Jejuri. He prayed to the family deity *Sri Markanda* for strength and help. His position at that time was like an "orphan."<sup>20</sup> One priest of the temple named "Aglave" offered him one horse and four hundred rupees. From Jejuri he went to Nagpur and sought Raghuji Bhonsle's help and protection. Raghuji welcomed him and made all arrangements for his stay. When the news reached Subhedar Kashirao, who was then at Poona, he reported it to the Peshwa and Sindhia. They wrote letters to Raghuji demanding Yashwantrao's arrest. Scenting danger Yashwantrao left Nagpur. But he was hotly pursued by Bhonsle's men, who captured him at Byahad. On the way Yashwantrao "changed his dress and fled to Maheswar."<sup>21</sup> In the *Kaifyat* it is narrated that he escaped from the prison by changing his dress and Bapu Vithal remained in the prison.

But all these odds did not affect Yashwantrao's unflagging spirit. He went to Khandesh and was welcomed by the Bhil Chief

Zunjar Naik Bhil. He helped him with 55,000 rupees and about 125 cavalry. Yashwantrao then started his campaigns against Sindhia and the Peshwa. He plundered Sultanpur and Nandurbar in North Khandesh. Hearing that his eldest brother Kashirao was marching against him, he crossed the Narmada and went to Dhar. Anandrao Pawar, the Dhar Chief, gave him shelter and employed him in his army. But Yashwantrao was not destined to stay there for long. Sindhia threatened Anandrao and ordered the latter to expel Yashwantrao. He, however, took from Pawar thirty thousand rupees with which he raised a considerable number of horse.

By then Yashwantrao had started plundering activities in the Peshwa's and Sindhia's territories. He also opened war against Kashirao and demanded the release of Khanderao (the late Malhar's son), who was in Kashirao's custody. Yashwantrao declared Khanderao as the rightful heir to the Holkar family. This declaration had a good effect. Many old followers of the Holkar regime came under his patronage.<sup>22</sup>

With renewed vigour Yashwantrao fell upon Kashirao's forces at Maheshwar and took the latter under his possession. He got hold of the large treasure of Ahalyabai preserved at Maheshwar.<sup>23</sup> Financially he became solvent which helped him to conduct bitter hostilities against Sindhia. During the summer of 1800 the two rivals were engaged in a deadly combat. The widows of Mahadji Sindhia, who had been demanding *Jagirs* from Daulatrao, started hostilities in the north. Yashwantrao now wanted to exploit the situation. He paid a visit to them at Malwa and persuaded them to adopt Khanderao. His object was to put a rival claimant to Daulatrao's possessions. But the plan did not materialize as the ladies escaped to Mewar. It would be no exaggeration to say that the people became "fatigued and annoyed" with the Peshwa and Sindhia.<sup>24</sup> The reason was that during the last four years the people of Maratha empire had no respite. On November 1, 1800, Yashwantrao suddenly attacked Ujjain and raided it. From there he returned to the Narmada to resist Daulatrao's forces that came there. In December 1800 Daulatrao left Poona. Before leaving Poona he appointed Baloji Kunjar as administrator of Poona. Malhar's widow and his son Khanderao were removed to Bajirao's palace for safety.

While Yashwantrao, since the middle of 1799, was fighting single-handed the forces of Sindhia in Khandesh, Malwa and Northern India with varying fortunes, his elder brother Vithoji wrought havoc in the region between Khandesh and the Krishna. The Peshwa had lost his authority in the region. Vithoji declared Amritrao as the

ruler of the region and proclaimed himself as an agent of Amritrao. He mercilessly ravaged the Pandharpur region. Bajirao II became alarmed. He had sent a force of 20,000 under Balaji Kunjar and Bapu Gokhale. Vithoji was not only defeated but was brought as a prisoner to Poona. Bajirao decided to inflict an exemplary punishment on Vithoji so that his enemies as well as his step-brother Amritrao would not dare to give him troubles in future. "Vithoji was first tortured, beaten with cane and then trampled to death by an elephant."<sup>25</sup> This incident took place on April 16, 1801. Bajirao now began to feel acutely his waning influence as the people of Maharashtra now extended their sympathy to Yashwantrao and his family and held a contempt for the Peshwa. In doing away with Vithoji Bajirao violated the convention of the Maratha Empire. The Maratha chiefs always made a distinction between an ordinary rebel and a political agitator. The latter was treated courteously when captured; the customary punishments were fine and confiscation of properties. In the case of Vithoji this practice was not followed. Khare described it as "a heinous act."<sup>26</sup> Bajirao's action cannot be justified in any way. The looting and plundering activities of Vithoji were not so serious as to demand such an exemplary action. The Peshwa's Sardars like Daulatrao and his general Sharzarao Ghatge also plundered his territories previously, but they were not punished at all.

Yashwantrao, though aggrieved, did not express his anger openly. On the contrary he immediately wrote a letter seeking the Peshwa's forgiveness and offering him his faithful service. The Peshwa, however, displayed no mood to settle the dispute. Yashwantrao too concentrated all his forces against Sindhia. The theatre of operations extended from the south of the Narmada to Ujjain in the north. On July 17, 1801, he made a sudden dash on Ujjain. In the severe fighting that took place, Sindhia lost some of his officers and Yashwantrao won the battle. Sindhia's another contingent crossed the Narmada. A battle was fought at Satvas. Daulatrao could hardly retrieve the losses. From June to October the region between the Narmada and Ujjain became the field of operation of both parties. Sindhia's authority in the region was a precarious one. He sent an urgent message to his father-in-law and general Sharzarao Ghatge to come to his aid. But Sharzarao was busy in collecting the promised subsidy from the Peshwa. He left Poona on July 12, and reached the Narmada on October 9, 1801. On the way he mercilessly devastated everything. The father-in-law and the son-in-law combined their forces, inflicted a crushing defeat on Yashwantrao, and took



possession of Indore and Ujjain.<sup>27</sup> Yashwantrao's setback was temporary. He not only recovered from his reverses but also consolidated his position. Even some persons of Sindhia's army joined him. On October 30, 1801, he defeated severely Ghatge and sent him back to Ujjain. This victory was significant. Sindhia at last realized the futility of continuing war with Yashwantrao and opened negotiations with the latter. For the first time he recognized Yashwantrao as a member of the Holkar house. The Peshwa for the first time as emperor of the Maratha Confederacy exerted his authority. He issued an order for the confiscation of Sindhia's and Holkar's *Saranjam* lands.<sup>28</sup> But this was a show only. He immediately issued an order of withdrawal.

Yashwantrao's star was now ascendant. He had a band of trusted followers like Fatehsingh Mane, Jivaji Yashwant, Harnath Singh, Amir Khan and Parashar Dadaji, the most experienced counsellor of the Holkar family. Yashwantrao stood out as the saviour of the Holkar family.<sup>29</sup>

The last act of the tragic drama (Peshwa's flight from Poona) was going to be enacted in October 1802. Yashwantrao concentrated his forces on Poona. His aim was to obtain possession of his imprisoned nephew Khanderao. He had already secured the person of Kashirao and kept a strict vigilance on him at the fort of Sendhawa.

The Peshwa sent a force under Dhondopant Godbole against Yashwantrao. In March 1802 Godbole was thoroughly defeated. But Yashwantrao did not take hasty action. He displayed a conciliatory spirit and sent his representative Parashar Dadaji to Poona for negotiations. Raghuji Bhonsle at that time visited Poona. He advised Bajirao to effect a compromise with Yashwantrao. But the Peshwa refused. It seemed that "Bajirao would do nothing which was beneficial to his kingdom."<sup>30</sup>

Yashwantrao despatched his two chiefs, Fateh Singh Mane and Shahmat Khan, to exact tribute from Bajirao's dominions. He himself moved south from Thalner and sent another appeal to the Peshwa. Bajirao now realized the gravity of the situation. Outwardly he displayed his willingness to effect a peaceful solution, but he wanted only to gain time so that Sindhia with his full force would come to his help. The situation became tense when Sharzarao removed Khanderao and his mother from Poona to the Asirgarh fort. The Peshwa took another hasty action. He confiscated the whole estate of the Holkars.<sup>31</sup> This infuriated Yashwantrao beyond measure. He ordered his captains to ravage indiscriminately the Peshwa's territory in the Krishna region.

Yashwantrao's successive victories seemed to have brought a good sense to the Peshwa. He sent emissaries to Yashwantrao to talk on his behalf. But as they were not important persons, Yashwantrao sent them back. He urged that he was willing to talk if either Baloji Kunjar or Nimbaji Bhaskar was despatched to him. Here also the Peshwa showed his deceitfulness. His only aim was to gain time. But there was no sober person at his court to avert the crisis. Raghuji Bhonsle's two *vakils* advised him to settle matters "mutually."<sup>32</sup> Though the Peshwa was willing to yield, Baloji Kunjar buoyed up his sagging morale and asked him not to listen to such requests.

Yashwantrao now resolved to exact retribution for all the losses he had suffered. He attacked Ahmednagar with fury and plundered the city mercilessly. This frightened the Peshwa and he tried to conciliate Yashwantrao with presents and dresses. But the latter insisted on Kunjar's arrival at his camp. Kunjar did not go. Yashwantrao's generals, Amir Khan and Mane, had a stiff battle at Baramati on October 8. The Peshwa's forces were completely overthrown. The defeat of the Peshwa created "surprise and confusion at Poona".<sup>33</sup> The wealthy citizens concealed their property and fled in different directions in consternation. The Peshwa sent jewellery and valuables to Sinhagarh and himself prepared to proceed to Raigarh.

In the meanwhile Sindhia sent his *Bakshi* Sadashiv Bhaskar with a force, who reached Wanavdi on October 22. The Peshwa felt elated and paid him three lakhs of rupees. Both sides were ready for the inevitable engagement. For the last time Yashwantrao appealed to the Peshwa for mutual settlement. He urged that Baloji Kunjar and Nimbaji Bhaskar should be sent for discussion. In the same letter he wrote that if they were not sent to him, he himself would go to Poona. It was not his desire to do any harm to the Peshwa's person. He would free Bajirao from Sindhia's control. Kunjar did not go; instead he assured the Peshwa that on October 25, 1802, he would destroy Yashwantrao in the battlefield. The Peshwa thus lost the last chance of avoiding the crisis.

On October 25, both sides prepared for the denouement. It was the Diwali day. Yashwantrao sent word that he would wait for two hours and then he would begin his action. At about 8 o'clock Sindhia's men began cannonading. Yashwantrao restrained his men until twenty-five cannon balls were fired. At 11 o'clock he charged the artillery of Sindhia. It led to the "entire discomfiture of the army of Daulatrao Sindhia."<sup>34</sup> The whole of Sindhia's artillery and baggage fell into the hands of Yashwantrao. The Peshwa and his

brother (Chimnaji) stood at Wanavdi. Immediately on receipt of the news of Sindhia's defeat, the Peshwa proceeded to the Parvati hill.<sup>35</sup> As Yashwantrao's men were hotly pursuing him, the Peshwa proceeded to Wadgaon and then to Sinhagarh. Yashwantrao took possession of Poona.

The Peshwa now began to spend most of his time near the British outpost. Yashwantrao did his best to persuade him to return to Poona. If he desired he could have seized the Peshwa's person, but he refrained from doing so; he even sent him cartloads of food and other daily necessities. Bajirao on October 27 left Sinhagarh and descended the Western Ghat. From there he went to Raigarh and then to Mahad. On October 30, 1802, he wrote a letter to the Bombay Governor, seeking British alliance.<sup>36</sup> Duncan in his despatch of November 5, 1802, sought Malcolm's advice, who, as Private Secretary to the Governor-General, paid a visit to Bombay in connection with the murder of Haji Khalikhan, the late Persian Ambassador. Malcolm in his despatch of November 5, 1802, asked the Governor to proceed cautiously against Bajirao. According to him, the Peshwa since 1798 "acted more like an enemy than a friend of the Company Government."<sup>37</sup> During the war with the ruler of Mysore when he was urged to join and help the British troops he did remain passive and neutral. Soon after the conclusion of war with Tipu, Lord Wellesley again offered to renew negotiations with the Poona Government and to conclude a Subsidiary treaty with Bajirao. Had the Peshwa acquiesced in this proposal of the Governor-General, it could have increased the strength and stability of the British Government in the Western peninsula of India. At the same time peace would have prevailed there. The conclusion of the Subsidiary treaty would have ensured the tranquillity of the territories of the Peshwa. Bajirao had not only refused to accept the proposal but also pursued during the period "a weak, irresolute and jealous policy."<sup>38</sup> With a view to "alarming" the other Maratha States he endeavoured to keep the negotiations with the British Government alive. This "crooked and unmanly" policy did not give him the desired result. Taking advantage of his weakness, the "great Jagirdars" of his dominion withheld their payment of revenues to his treasury.<sup>39</sup>

Malcolm was of opinion that the Peshwa would never "enter into Subsidiary engagements with the English" until he was reduced to a miserable state in which he could despair the loss of his life or of his liberty, and could not indulge "a hope of being extricated" by another power.<sup>40</sup> The Peshwa, in his letter of October 25, expressed

his desire to "seek an asylum" in the Company's territories. Malcolm advised the Governor to inform the Peshwa that "all political arrangements rested with the Governor-General,"<sup>41</sup> who would derive "considerable political advantages" from the situation. In the meantime the Governor of Bombay should send "a vessel of some strength" to the river of Bankot to escort the Peshwa to any part of the Company's territories, if the situation would demand. At the same time an order should be despatched to the commanding officer at Bankot "not to refuse an asylum in the Company's territories" to the Peshwa if it was "solicited" and "to give him a conveyance to Bombay" if it was required.<sup>42</sup> But the officer should be given special instructions not "to make any offer of that nature" on his own. Malcolm thought that Bajirao would never fly to Bombay "on the authority of such a document" unless he imagined "his life or his liberty to be in immediate and imminent danger."<sup>43</sup> In that case the Peshwa should be "treated with respect" and "attention" should be given to him as his "exalted rank" demanded. Malcolm thought that such an offer would induce Bajirao to make a political settlement with the Company as he had got "a conclusive proof of the friendship of the English Government". This measure, he considered, might induce Yashwantrao to negotiate with Barry Close, the Resident at Poona, for a settlement when he would fail to get possession of the Peshwa's person. Malcolm was not blind to the evil portents which might come out of this arrangement. This might pave the way for his (the Peshwa's) smooth restoration to power and he might refuse to concede the terms and conditions which the British Government would claim as the "price of their support."<sup>44</sup> In spite of this, the Bombay Government should not decline to give him asylum.

The Governor of Bombay lost no time in transmitting Malcolm's advice to Bajirao. On December 1, 1802, Bajirao left Suvarnadurg for Bassein by a British vessel, where he reached on December 16. On December 31, 1802, he ultimately signed the Treaty of Bassein.

Among the Maratha chiefs it was Yashwantrao who realized the full implications of the Peshwa's signature of the Treaty of Bassein. He gave vent to his feeling in the following words: "Bajirao has destroyed the Maratha power. He has taken money from the English and given them territory. In due time they will seize the whole territory as they have done in Mysore."<sup>45</sup> He sought Ambaji Ingle's "mediation" in negotiating peace between him and Sindhia to save the Maratha Empire from destruction. But Sindhia did not respond to his proposal at that time.

To what extent Bajirao and Yashwantrao were responsible for the crisis? Yashwantrao all along showed his eagerness for the settle-

ment of disputes. He had least feeling of animus and reprisals against the Peshwa though he had lost two brothers in these conflicts. It was the Peshwa and his associates who had not only closed all paths of negotiations but had confined his nephew Khanderao in Asirgarh. Moreover the Peshwa had confiscated his territories. Despite all these provocations, Yashwantrao made a last appeal to him for peaceful settlement of the dispute. Even after his occupation of Poona he tried his best to persuade the Peshwa to return to his capital. He instructed his officers not to do any harm to the Peshwa's person. Bajirao was a man of "mean nature" who relied mostly on his wicked counsellors like Balaji Kunjar, Daulatrao Sindhia and others. Thus the malady of internal dissension and mutual rancour among the Maratha chiefs hastened the process of British intervention in Maratha politics.

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21. *Nagpurkar Bhonslanchi Bakhar*, p. 188.
22. Khare, Vol. XIII, p. 6867.
23. Phatak, N.R., *Life of Yashwantrao Holkar* (in Marathi), p. 25.
24. *Holkarshahicha Itihas*, Part II, p. 30.
25. Sardesai, G.S., *Marathi Riyasat, Uttar Bibhag*, Part III, p. 180; Also *Peshwaichi Akhor*, p. 101; Also *Peshwanchi Bakhar*, p. 164.

26. Khare, Vol. XIII, p. 6857; Also Letter No. 6027.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-5; Also *Peshwanchi Bakhar*, p. 165.
28. Phatak, N.R., *Life of Tashwantrao Holkar* (in Marathi), p. 41.
29. Malcolm, Sir John, *Report on Malwa & Adjoining Countries*, p. 130.
30. Khare, Vol. XIII, p. 6870.
31. *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar*, Vol. 41, No. 33.
32. *Nagpurkar Bhonslanchi Bakhar*, p. 196.
33. Sec. and Pol. Dept. Diary No. 129, pp. 6231-33; Captain Kennedy, Acting Resident of Bankot, to Bombay Government October 19, 1802.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 6320; Bombay Govt. to the Court of Directors, November 2, 1802.
35. *Holkaranchi Kaifiyat*, p. 158.
36. Sec. and Pol. Dept. Diary No. 130, p. 6433; Jonathan Duncan to Major John Malcolm, November 5, 1802.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 6434-6449; John Malcolm to Jonathan Duncan, November 5, 1802.
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*, No. 134, p. 225; Translation of Papers of Intelligence, Poona, January 3, 1803.

## CHAPTER II

# Second Maratha War and its Aftermath

THE British Government achieved its object when Bajirao signed the Treaty of Bassein. Without involving itself in a war against the head of the Maratha Confederacy the Company extended its sphere of influence in the Maratha Empire. Now it was an obligation on its part to help the Peshwa to return to his capital. The Government formulated a plan for the restoration of the Peshwa. The Governor-General thought that the southern Jagirdars and subjects of the Maratha Empire would cooperate with the British Government in its task of the restoration of Bajirao for which no means should be spared to "conciliate the goodwill of the Maratha Chiefs."<sup>1</sup> Major-General Wellesley was entrusted with the task of the restoration of the Peshwa. He started from Madras. The Resident at Hyderabad was directed to instruct Colonel Stevenson, the commanding officer of the Subsidiary force, to join the army of the Nizam. Lieutenant-General Stuart was instructed to arrange for the "immediate advance" of the British troops into the Maratha country.

On February 3, 1803, John Malcolm was appointed Resident at Mysore.<sup>2</sup> The Governor of Madras in his despatch of March 7, 1803, asked Malcolm to make "political intercourse" with members of the Maratha States.<sup>3</sup> Malcolm was entrusted with the task as he was thoroughly conversant with the sentiments of the Governor-General and the political arrangements to be made in that quarter of India. Moreover Malcolm was acquainted with the character and policies of the Maratha chiefs. He had prepared a memorandum on the states of the southern Rajas, Sardars and Jagirdars of the Maratha Empire.

The southern Maratha chiefs were classified into two classes: the Rajas and hereditary Jagirdars; the officers of the Poona Government who commanded troops or forts.

To the first class belonged the Raja of Kolhapur with a revenue of twenty to twenty-five lakhs of rupees. He had an army of 1,500 cavalry and 3,000 peons and was not on friendly terms with the Peshwa. Malcolm was of opinion that the Raja would not "contribute any exertions to the restoration" of Bajirao.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps he would



be neutral for his "apprehensions of the British power". Malcolm suggested that he should be induced to afford "supplies to the army of General Wellesley."

Among the Jagirdars, the most important was the family of the Patwardhans represented at that time by Balajirao Gopal, Ramchandra Appa, generally known as Appasaheb, Trimbakrao Raghunath and Chintamanrao. Balajirao Gopal, who was the eldest of the family, possessed Miraj and its surrounding districts. His territories yielded a revenue of nearly four lakhs of rupees. He had a force of 200 horse and 1,500 peons. Appasaheb had a revenue of four lakhs and maintained an army of 500 horse and 1,000 foot. Trimbakrao Raghunath's territories yielded a revenue of two lakhs of rupees. He had an army of 300 horse and 1,000 infantry. Chintamanrao had a *jagir* worth four lakhs and a half. He had an army of 700 cavalry and 1,000 peons. The Patwardhans were the old enemies of the Rajas of Kolhapur and were firmly attached to the Peshwa. For their misfortunes they blamed Sindhia.<sup>5</sup> They had confidence in the strength of the English and with their help they would be "permitted to enjoy in quiet the patrimony bequeathed them by their fathers."

Besides the Patwardhans there were the Rastias, who were Konkan Brahmins. Madhurao Rastia, the head of the family, enjoyed a revenue of twenty lakhs of rupees and maintained an army of 4,000 horse and an equal number of infantry. He had hostile relations with the Raja of Kolhapur. Parsuram Pandit Pratinidhi, another important Jagirdar, had a revenue of ten lakhs of rupees and maintained a force of 3,000 horse. He was attached to Bajirao.

There were some other chiefs who enjoyed a meagre income. The most prominent among them were Appa Desai of Nipani, Pandurang Baburao of Baramati and Venkatrao of Ichalkaranji. They were friendly to the Peshwa.<sup>6</sup>

The Desai of Kittur in Belgaum had an income of four lakhs of rupees and an army of 1,000 horse and 4,000 peons. He would be kept in "allegiance to Peshwa" as his territory was always exposed to the English attack.

Among the military officers of the State was Bapu Gokhale who had a force of 2,000 horse, 1,000 infantry with two or three guns.<sup>7</sup> Another distinguished military commander of the artillery department of the Poona government was Ganpatrao Panse. He had an army of 1,300 horse and 500 peons. Bapu Vithal who was attached to the Peshwa commanded 500 horse. Bapu Vithal Seo Deo kept an army of 600 horse. Balkrishna Gangadhar had a body of 500 horse.

As already stated, Arthur Wellesley was entrusted with the duty of the restoration of the Peshwa to Poona. A strong force had been collected on the frontier of Mysore. He crossed the Tungabhadra on February 12, 1803. He issued a general proclamation and assured the Patwardhan chiefs that their cases would be recommended to the Peshwa if they would cooperate with the British troops.<sup>8</sup> Simultaneously, Arthur Wellesley's solemn assurance that the old enmity between the Patwardhans and the Kolhapur Raj that had been raging on for several years would be composed through the mediation of the Peshwa, spurred the Patwardhans to unite their forces with the British troops.<sup>9</sup> In the beginning of April, Major-General Wellesley was joined on the bank of the Krishna by the chiefs like Appasaheb Patwardhan, Bapu Gokhale, Bapu Vithal and the *Vakil* of the Kittur chief. But initially the prospect seemed to be bleak to Arthur Wellesley as he found that the troops of the Kittur chief were utterly unprovided and he had to provide them with advance to "keep them from starving."<sup>10</sup> The discipline and conduct of the English troops on their march through the country had created a good impression. In his private despatch to the Governor-General Malcolm wrote:

"... the march of a military force through this distracted country has had the effect of reconciling its contending chiefs, and of giving confidence to the oppressed inhabitants and the union of all ranks in a sentiment of respect for the English name, has occasioned an abundance of supplies of every description."<sup>11</sup>

On April 11, 1803, General Wellesley reached Pandharpur. He sent a message to Holkar's generals, Fateh Singh Mane and Amir Khan, to fall back, himself advancing towards Poona. Arthur Wellesley had requested Malcolm to accompany him as "political questions of various magnitude seemed likely to arise and to press for decision."<sup>12</sup> It was felt that Malcolm's presence would facilitate the execution of the Governor-General's policy in the Maratha Empire. He accordingly joined Major-General Wellesley's camp with a small escort of cavalry.

Both Arthur Wellesley and Malcolm proceeded towards Poona. When they were about sixty miles away from the city, they got the information that Yashwantrao intended to raze the city of Poona on the approach of the British army. They hastened on, covering the distance in thirty-two hours, entered Poona and saved it from "total destruction."<sup>13</sup>

The Peshwa's return to the capital was not an impromptu affair. It had been Wellesley's plan to bring Bajirao back to Poona at the

end of April. But the Peshwa returned to the capital by the second week of May. He ascended the Bhore Ghat on May 6, and reached the Chinchwad, near Poona, on May 7, 1803.<sup>14</sup> May 13 was fixed for the Peshwa's return to his capital. On the same day at an auspicious hour the Peshwa returned to the capital, which he had left five months ago. The Peshwa was greeted with gun salutes. But "the gunshots were only announcing the beginning of the end of the Maratha power and independence."<sup>15</sup> It looked as if the Peshwa had been restored. But for practical purposes the restoration was more nominal than real. The Peshwa was now shorn of most of his powers which he had enjoyed before he was forced to sign the treaty of Subsidiary Alliance. He had now no say in framing the foreign policy of the State, and gone was his authority over other Maratha States. Bajirao's restoration, bereft of real power, laid the foundation of British primacy in the Poona affairs and enfeebled the Marathas in the long run.

The Governor-General, who had so long bided his time, now saw his chance of cashing in on the crisis of the Marathas. In his despatch to the Court of Directors he wrote: "It afforded me the most favourable opportunity for the complete establishment of the interest of the British power in Marhatta Empire without the hazard of involving us in a contest with any party."<sup>16</sup> The Governor-General had expected that the Maratha leaders would honour the Treaty of Bassein, since it was the Peshwa, their chief, who signed it. At Mahad in December 1802, when Bajirao was talking of a defensive alliance with the British Government, John Malcolm as Private Secretary to the Governor-General asked Close, the British Resident of Poona, to induce Sindhia to fall into the British web of alliance. As soon as the Treaty of Bassein was signed, the Governor-General called upon Daulatrao Sindhia to give his consent to its terms. Lord Wellesley also intended to send a person in the capacity of a Resident to the court of Nagpur for the accomplishment of alliance with the Raja of Nagpur. He immediately despatched Resident Colonel Collins to Sindhia's camp. Collins arrived in Sindhia's camp on February 27, 1803. The first meeting took place on March 11. Collins urged Sindhia to give his approbation to the Treaty of Bassein and sign a separate agreement with the British Government. To these demands Sindhia gave no positive reply. He, on the other hand, complained that the Peshwa at the time of concluding the Treaty of Bassein had violated the conventions of the Maratha Confederacy. In the Maratha Empire, the Peshwa was the chief. His decision was binding on the Sardars, but he would have to consult

Sindhia, Holkar and Bhonsle on important matters like war or treaty. In making the Treaty of Salbai (May 17, 1782) Sindhia had played the role of a mediator. In this case the Peshwa did not observe the conventions. He also emphasized that the Maratha leaders would themselves settle their disputes and needed no British intervention.<sup>17</sup> These parleys went on till August 3, 1803, when the Residency was withdrawn.

While these talks had been going on, Sindhia and Bhonsle tried to enlist Yashwantrao's support in organizing a coalition against the British. They held that the Peshwa had concluded the treaty under "compulsion" and wanted to throw it into wind at any moment and free the Peshwa from British tutelage. They had already received secret overtures from the Peshwa.<sup>18</sup> On May 4, Sindhia left Burhanpur and began his march to meet Bhonsle, Bhonsle also moved to meet Sindhia. The Governor-General instructed Collins to demand from Sindhia whether he wanted to enter into hostilities with the British and warned him against the danger.<sup>19</sup> The Governor-General also added that the British Government would protect the Nizam against Sindhia's attack. He also directed Collins to demand from Sindhia a positive reply and communicate it directly to Arthur Wellesley, who was then at Poona. He also wrote a similar letter to the Nagpur Raja.

During June and July Arthur Wellesley began to make preparations for war as it seemed inevitable. John Malcolm had arrived with Major General Wellesley at Poona in April. He then fell a victim to fever. While he was convalescing Malcolm expressed his sentiments to the Governor-General on the cross-currents of Maratha politics and especially on the character and conduct of the Peshwa. Bajirao, according to Malcolm, was timid and vacillating. He would honour the treaty and would be dependent on the British power, as he had no other alternative. About Sindhia and Bhonsle, Malcolm wrote that they must give "the most satisfactory assurance of their friendly conduct towards the British Government; and act in a manner correspondent with such profession or that Colonel Collins must leave his (Sindhia's) camp, and his departure under such circumstances will justify hostilities on the part of the English Government."<sup>20</sup> Merrick Shawe, Private Secretary to the Governor-General, congratulated him for this despatch as it brought into light the weakness of Maratha character and made the British task somewhat easy to grapple with the labyrinth of Maratha politics.

Arthur Wellesley ordered the British troops to march near Sindhia's camp in Berar. He asked the southern Maratha chiefs to

join his camp. Indisposition prevented Malcolm from accompanying Major-General Wellesley to the northward. In spite of his failing health, he had taken part at all conferences which Barry Close had with the Peshwa *darbar*.<sup>21</sup> On June 4, Close received a visit from the Peshwa's officer Raghunath, who complained that various propositions had been offered by the Peshwa's *darbar* for the purpose of satisfying the southern sardars and inducing them to accompany the British army. But the southern sardars had complaints as well and observed that their demands were not redressed by the Peshwa. Appasaheb demanded that his paternal property in the Savanur province should be restored to him. The meeting was inconclusive.

Another meeting took place on June 9, where the Peshwa, Close and Malcolm were present. Close opened the meeting and charged the Peshwa that none of the Maratha chiefs had joined the Major-General who had advanced towards Ahmednagar. The Peshwa admitted the truth of Close's statement and expressed his anxious desire to stand by the alliance which he had contracted. Bajirao held that the settlements with Bapu Gokhale and Appa Desai of Nipani were effected. To satisfy Ram Chandra Appa he had exerted all his influence. In this connection it should be mentioned that the British Resident wanted Appasaheb to take charge of the *Jari Patka*, the flag of the State.<sup>22</sup> But the Peshwa intended to entrust the flag to Sadashivrao Phadke. He was not well disposed to the Patwardhans. When Close and Malcolm insisted on Appasaheb's claim Bajirao agreed to the proposal on condition that Appasaheb would pay him two lakhs of rupees as *nazarana* and would take an oath of allegiance to his Government. Appasaheb paid a visit to Close and Malcolm and demanded an assignment of land for the maintenance of troops south of the Krishna. The British officers tried to lessen the differences between him and the Poona *darbar*. But Appasaheb was out of "temper, undecided and indisposed" to proceed to Arthur Wellesley's camp.<sup>23</sup> Appa Desai of Nipani, however, received the *Jari Patka*. It is an irony of fate that despite the solemn profession of the Patwardhans to help the war efforts of the British, only Appa Desai and Bapu Gokhale took an active part in the campaign against Sindhia and Bhonsle. Appa Desai's participation in the Maratha war of 1803-04 evoked the Peshwa's sympathy when the latter rewarded him with the title of *Sar Laskar*.

Arthur Wellesley selected South Berar as the theatre of operations against Sindhia and Bhonsle. He ordered the various chiefs and agents to assemble the troops. The tension became very high. Colonel Collins demanded that Sindhia must give a definite reply.

But he was curtly told by Sindhia that the latter could not give a definite reply until he met Bhonsle. It exasperated the Governor-General who thought that the Maratha chiefs wished to gain time. He asked Collins to demand from Sindhia whether it should be peace or war.

At last on June 4 Sindhia and Bhonsle arrived at Malkapur for discussions. Collins also demanded a reply from Raghuji Bhonsle who wanted time to study the Treaty of Bassein. When the Maratha chiefs met again on June 8, Collins pressed for a reply. But they evaded. On June 12, Collins gave a written threat that he decided to leave Sindhia's *darbar*.<sup>24</sup> Both Sindhia and Bhonsle were busy in secret negotiations with Yashwantrao. On June 19, Collins served an ultimatum on Sindhia, demanding a suitable reply within two days. Sindhia asked for six days' time during which he would have a discussion with Bhonsle. A reply came on June 28. They held that they had not got a full copy of the Treaty of Bassein and unless they could obtain it, it would be premature for them to decide their future course of action.<sup>25</sup>

On June 13, 1803, Malcolm wrote a letter to Collins asking him to apprise Sindhia and Bhonsle of the Governor-General's sentiments. On June 28, he joined Arthur Wellesley's camp after recovery from his illness. On the following day he and Wellesley had a lengthy discussion on the conduct of the Maratha chiefs and the policy to be pursued towards them. Malcolm thought that both Sindhia and Bhonsle were pursuing delaying tactics in order to form a coalition of the Maratha chiefs against the British. In his private letter to Shawe he suggested that Sindhia and Bhonsle must within a few days give the "most satisfactory assurance of their friendly conduct towards the British."<sup>26</sup> Any delay would justify declaration of war by the British Government. In the month of July it became clear that war was unavoidable. Major-General Wellesley formed his plan of operations with Malcolm and decided to strike against Ahmednagar. Arthur Wellesley was invested with extensive powers in the ensuing war with the Marathas and this enabled him to achieve his object in no time.

In the meantime Colonel Collins had a number of meetings (July 16 and 25, 1803) which proved to be barren. Accordingly he was directed to leave the court of Sindhia. On August 7, Major-General Wellesley issued a proclamation justifying his declaration of war against Sindhia and Bhonsle.<sup>27</sup>

While Major-General Wellesley was preparing to attack Sindhia and Bhonsle's military outposts in the south, Malcolm was again

attacked with fever and dysentery which ultimately forced him to leave the camp. A little discussion on Malcolm's position in Wellesley's camp is necessary. Though delegated as a Resident at Mysore, Malcolm also acted as a political associate of General Wellesley, Merrick Shawe's (Private Secretary to the Governor-General) letter to Malcolm on July 15 1803, gives an idea of his position in Wellesley's camp. He wrote: "His Excellency requests that you will contrive to write daily from General Wellesley's camp. A few words will be sufficient."<sup>28</sup> This shows that considerable responsibilities were entrusted to him. His absence from the camp during the war period added confusion.

Before discussing the details of the war a few words about Yashwantrao's activities and his desertion from the cause of Sindhia and Bhonsle are necessary. In March 1803 Holkar left Poona and went to Aurangabad. He exacted eleven lakhs of rupees as tribute <sup>29</sup> He also collected money from the Nizam's towns—Paithan and Jalna. This was an insult to the British Government as the Nizam was its ally. But General Wellesley thought it wise not to attack Yashwantrao Holkar then as this would unite the Maratha forces against the British.

In April and May 1803 hectic efforts were made to form a united front of Sindhia, Bhonsle and Holkar. Bhonsle assured Yashwantrao that he would persuade Sindhia to agree to the demands of Yashwantrao. His demands were modest. He urged that Khanderao Holkar (who was in Sindhia's custody) should be released and the districts occupied by Sindhia should be restored to him. Daulatrao and Raghujī met at Malkapur on June 4 and sent words to Yashwantrao, "we should not quarrel among ourselves"<sup>30</sup> On Holkar's insistence Khanderao was released in July 1803.

Yashwantrao was no less patriotic than Daulatrao and Raghujī. Since his occupation of Poona he made systematic efforts to fight for *Swaraj* and *Swadharma* (Hindu religion).<sup>31</sup> His letters to Raghujī Bhonsle dated May 19 and August 27 clearly demonstrated that he was willing to fight and suffer for the cause of his country.<sup>32</sup> He demanded that Sindhia also should display generosity. He requested Bhonsle that he should exert his influence on Sindhia so that the latter would restore his territories.

But Sindhia, on the advice of his father-in-law Sharzarao, was not disposed to hand over the territories of Yashwantrao Holkar. Sindhia did another mischief and sabotaged the plan of coalition when he wrote a letter to the Peshwa: "Let us make a show of satisfying his demands. After the war is over, we shall both wreak our

full vengeance upon him.”<sup>33</sup> This letter was intercepted by Amritrao, who handed it over to General Wellesley. Wellesley sent this letter to Yashwantrao. This opened the eyes of Yashwantrao, who thought that the entire plan was a subterfuge and directed to destroy him. He at once marched to Malwa and did not join Sindhia and Bhonsle during the war period. Thus Sindhia and his father-in-law displayed an utter lack of morality and political foresight at this hour of crisis and pushed the nation to the brink of disaster. The task of the British became comparatively easy as they had to fight against only two Maratha chiefs like Bhonsle and Sindhia. Yashwantrao's desertion weakened the cause of the Marathas.

The British plan of war worked efficiently. From two different directions they attacked Sindhia and Bhonsle on August 7, 1803. Lord Lake, the Commander-in-Chief, harassed Sindhia's possessions in Northern India. Arthur Wellesley attacked Sindhia and Bhonsle's forces in the Deccan. This war is generally known as the Second Anglo-Maratha war.<sup>34</sup> This name was given by the English historians in their works. But the Marathi historians differ in their opinions. According to them the first Anglo-Maratha war took place during the time of Savai Madhavrao. In that war all the Sardars of the Maratha Kingdom were involved. So the name “First Maratha war” is justified. In the war of 1803 the Peshwa was not involved. All the Sardars of the Deccan did not take part in it. Holkar ultimately withdrew himself from this war. Only Sindhia and Bhonsle were united. It should be called “Shinde and Bhonsle's war against the Company.”

Arthur Wellesley started his brilliant campaign against the Marathas on August 7, and within four months brought it to a successful conclusion. He had nearly forty thousand troops at his disposal. His object was to destroy Sindhia's military base, which lay between Burhanpur and Ahmednagar. He decided to attack and occupy the Ahmednagar fort, which was a strong fortress, stocked with arms, ammunition and supplies. On August 10, he started the bombardment of the fort. The European officers of the fort betrayed Sindhia and went over to Wellesley.<sup>35</sup> The British Government's proclamation of protection to Europeans had a salutary effect. At the opportune moment they left their Maratha masters. Finding it impossible to resist, the Brahmin Killedar of the fort asked for terms and surrendered on August 12, 1803.

On August 28, Wellesley crossed the Godavari and proceeded to protect Aurangabad which he reached on August 29. His assistant, Colonel Stevenson, posted himself at Jafarbad to prevent



Sindhia's advance. Here skirmishes took place between Sindhia's Pindaries at Stevenson's men. Bhonsle joined Sindhia near Jalnapur. Fighting continued, culminating in the battle of Assai on September 24. The Maratha generals like Gopalrao Bhao and Vithal Pant Bakshi fought valiantly. The foreigners in Sindhia's service left him and offered allegiance to Wellesley. The British gained a decisive victory but their loss was immense. They had lost six hundred and sixty-three Europeans and more than one thousand and five hundred Indian soldiers. The Marathas fought well but they had no efficient general like Arthur Wellesley. Heroism and gallantry can hardly make up the deficiency of generalship.

Colonel Stevenson then marched towards Burhanpur. The Marathas rapidly proceeded there to defend the fort of Asirgarh and tried to interrupt the marches of Stevenson. Bhonsle all of a sudden arrived in the neighbourhood of Aurangabad to cut off Wellesley's supplies. Stevenson arrived at Burhanpur and captured it on September 15, without any opposition as Sindhia had little time for its defence. Stevenson then advanced towards Asirgarh. The killedar of the fort was bribed.<sup>36</sup> He surrendered it on October 21. The European officers as usual deserted Sindhia's service and went over to the English. Thus within three months Sindhia and Bhonsle lost their important bases in the south.

On November 6, Sindhia's agents, Yashwantrao and Naropant, went to Wellesley's camp for talks. Appa Desai was the mediator. After negotiations lasting for fifteen days it was decided that Sindhia should stay at twenty *kos* east of Ellichpur. Meanwhile Stevenson advanced against Bhonsle's strong fort of Gavilgarh. He left Balapore. Very soon Arthur Wellesley joined him. The combined forces of Wellesley and Stevenson made a sudden dash against Bhonsle's forces. Sindhia in violation of the truce joined Bhonsle. On November 29, the British forces attacked the Marathas at Adgaum. It was a severe battle. The English gained a decisive victory due to the efficient generalship of Wellesley. The Marathas fled in different directions. The Raja of Berar left his cannons and ammunition. The battle of Adgaum sealed the fate of Sindhia and Bhonsle.<sup>37</sup> Gavilgarh was next attacked and occupied on December 25, 1803.

In the north Lord Lake, the Commander-in-Chief who led the British forces, achieved spectacular success. On September 5, he took possession of Aligarh, which was well garrisoned and well protected by the Marathas. The Commander-in-Chief then made a rapid march on Delhi, which he occupied on September 14. The

helpless Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II, fell into Lake's hand. The British General then advanced towards Agra. On the way he took possession of Mathura. He arrived at Agra on October 4, and occupied it on October 17.

The rapid success of the British generals in the north and the south cast a spell of gloom on the Maratha chiefs. They had no other alternative but to sue for peace. Sindhia and Bhonsle sent *Vakils* to the camp of Arthur Wellesley who concluded two separate treaties with them. The Treaty of Devgaon was concluded with Raghuji Bhonsle on December 17, 1803.

Sindhia sent his agents, Munshi Kamalnayan and Bapu Vithalpant, who arrived at Arthur Wellesley's camp on December 23, 1803. They discussed the ways and means of concluding a treaty. A general conference took place in the camp. After a seven-day discussion the Treaty of Surji Anjangaon was signed on December 30, 1803.<sup>38</sup> The important clauses of the treaty were as follows:

1. Daulatrao Sindhia ceded to the East India Company and their allies, all his forts and territories in the Doab. He also gave up his claim on all the forts and territories, situated to the northward of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Gohad. But he was allowed to retain the territories situated between Jaipur and Jodhpur, and to the southward of Jaipur, which were formerly in his possession (Article 2).

2. Sindhia also agreed to surrender his rights on the forts of Broach and Ahmednagar (Article 3).

3. He ceded to the Company all the territories situated south of the Ajanta hills and all districts between the Godavari and the Ajanta hills (Article 4).

4. He further relinquished all claims on the Peshwa, the Nizam and Anandrao Gaikwad and recognized the independence of all those feudatories who had made separate engagements with the British (Article 5).

5. The East India Company restored to Daulatrao Sindhia the city of Burhanpur, the forts of Pawangarh and Dohad and the territories in Khandesh and Gujarat (Article 6).

6. The British Government recognized the districts of Dholpur, Bari and Rajkheda as personal *jagirs* of Sindhia (Article 7).

7. "Certain treaties have been made by the British Government with Rajas and others hereto feudatories of the Maharajah Ali Jah Daulatrao Sindhia. These treaties are to be confirmed and the Maharajah hereby renounces all claims upon the persons with whom such treaties have been made and declares them to be independent of his government and authority provided that none of the

territories, belonging to the Maharajah situated to the southward of those of the Rajas of Jaipur and Jodhpur, and the Rana of Gohad, of which the revenues have been collected by him or his amildars or have been applicable as Seranjamy to the payment of his troops, are granted away by such treaties" (Article 9).

8. It was also agreed that the rights of the Peshwa in Malwa and elsewhere would remain as they were and all the disputes arising out of this was to be settled amicably (Article 11).

9. Daulatrao Sindhia was forbidden to engage any foreigner such as Frenchman or American in his service (Article 13).

The treaty left Daulatrao Sindhia with truncated dominions and reduced political influence. His territorial loss was valued more than one crore and sixty lakhs of rupees in the Hindustan and in the Deccan.<sup>39</sup>

Malcolm could not participate in the war as he lay seriously ill first in Poona and then at Bombay. After his recovery Malcolm left Bombay on October 26, 1803, to join Arthur Wellesley's camp. He arrived at the camp in the middle of December and took an active part in the peace parleys. On December 24, a grand conference took place in the camp. Malcolm and Wellesley represented the British Government. Sindhia's ministers made overtures for a defensive alliance.<sup>40</sup> Wellesley and Malcolm thought it wise to conclude a separate treaty on the basis of the Subsidiary Alliance.

It appears to be strange that despite the conclusion of the Treaty of Surji Anjangaon, Sindhia could not remain at ease as he felt that the Treaty could not save him from the fury of Holkar. Sindhia's supreme concern now was to ensure protection against Yashwantrao and other enemies as well for which he evinced keen desire to form a defensive alliance with the Company. Arthur Wellesley sent Malcolm to Sindhia's camp at Burhanpur to conclude a supplementary treaty. He arrived at Sindhia's camp on January 11, 1804, and the following day he was presented to Sindhia.<sup>41</sup> Malcolm took with him a memorandum drawn up by Arthur Wellesley who had obtained first-hand information about Sindhia. It was a guideline to Malcolm to start negotiations at Sindhia's court. Arthur Wellesley did not fail to point out to Malcolm that the British Government held no rigid attitude on this point. Moreover he himself and the Governor-General in particular would have no objection if Malcolm would make some changes in the disposition of subsidiary force. He also assured Sindhia that territories under the eighth article of the treaty of peace would be restored to him. Yashwantrao Ghorepade, a minister under Sindhia, according to

the seventh article of the treaty would get pension for his maintenance. If Sindhia did not agree or provide him with adequate provision, his case should be referred to the Governor-General for consideration. Malcolm was specially instructed to see that all the chiefs, whom Sindhia would name as pension-holders or jagirdars, should get some kind of paper by way of *sunnud* for the sum which Sindhia would fix for them. They would get pensions for the day when Sindhia would ratify the treaty. In the meantime Malcolm might draw upon the Governor-General's name one or two lakhs of rupees for distribution among them.<sup>42</sup>

With these instructions he entered into discussions with Sindhia and his ministers. But the negotiations went on slowly as the attention of Sindhia and his ministers was engrossed by the Pindaris. The progress of the work was interrupted further when Sindhia was attacked with fever. But immediately on Sindhia's recovery Malcolm urged his ministers to start negotiations. He pointed out to them that further delay would diminish their chance of improving alliance with the British Government. This had a curious effect. Munshi Kamalnayan visited him immediately. He requested Malcolm to furnish him with a draft copy of the defensive alliance in Persian language, as this would enable the minister to "adjust the objectionable points" with Sindhia. In the course of the discussion with Kamalnayan Malcolm found "there was no essential difference except on the point of the perpetual residence of the Subsidiary force within the territories of Daulatrao Sindhia."<sup>43</sup> Malcolm left no stone unturned to emphasize the difficulty which would arise as a result of stationing subsidiary force outside Sindhia's capital. Any change or modification of the treaty, according to Malcolm, would "defeat the principal object of the alliance."<sup>44</sup> But Daulatrao Sindhia and his ministers were resolute in their insistence on the modification of this clause. Then Malcolm suggested an alternative proposal. Sindhia should cede to the British Government "the districts of Champaner, Godra and Dohad in Gujarat" which has been restored to him by the last treaty and the subsidiary force should be stationed to Dohad or its vicinity. Malcolm thought that it "would defeat the principal object of the alliance", but the stationing of a British force in Dohad or its vicinity would save Sindhia's dominions against the incursion of a powerful enemy. Malcolm despatched this modified draft treaty to the Governor-General for his opinion. Quick came the message from Calcutta in which it was stated that "the establishment of the subsidiary force was extremely desirable, but need not be a *sine qua non*."<sup>45</sup> The cession of Champaner, Godra and Dohad by Sindhia

seemed to the Governor-General impracticable. Merrick Shawe's private letter of February 27, 1804, relieved him of his anxiety. Shawe informed him of the Governor-General's approval of his proceedings at Sindhia's *darbar*.

Malcolm had a prolonged negotiation with Daulatrao and his ministers on defensive alliance. In the meantime Sindhia again fell sick. When he came round the work was resumed but it went on slowly. At last on February 27, 1804, a treaty was signed; it was known as the Treaty of Burhanpur. In the treaty Malcolm made some changes which made it somewhat different from the original draft.

In the first and second articles a minor change was made. It was stated that on Sindhia's request military assistance would be granted to him provided his territory was attacked. On the question of the "residence of subsidiary force"<sup>46</sup> within the dominion of Daulatrao Sindhia, Malcolm had a tough job. His recommendation of the cession of Champaner, Godra and Dohad, and the stationing of a British force at Dohad or some other place, did not receive Sindhia's approval. Sindhia's ministers pointed out the evils which would ensue as a result of subsidiary force being posted at a great distance. At last the change was effected in this way: "The troops are to be stationed when Your Excellency shall judge proper, and by a stipulation of the 16th article they are to be employed on such services as the Company's government shall think fit, provided such employment does not interfere with the performance of the Treaty which will give the British Government the use of the force for maintaining order and preserving tranquillity in the province where it is stationed."

Another minor change was made in the sixth article which authorized the British Government to use the subsidiary force when the situation would demand. In the modified treaty it was decided that "on trifling occasions subsidiary force was not to be employed."<sup>47</sup> On the eighth and ninth articles of the treaty a prolonged discussion took place. The ministers of Sindhia insisted that the principle of "reciprocity" should be established on the application of the eighth article. On the ninth article they objected to the right of "arbitration." Malcolm succeeded in convincing them that the "nature of alliance" and the different relations of the two governments "prevented the British Government from the application of the principle of reciprocity." The right of "arbitration" was indispensable as it afforded the British Government an opportunity to guard the allied States against the various dangers.<sup>48</sup>

On the fifteenth article Daulatrao Sindhia requested Malcolm that the British Government should use its influence to secure for him "that treatment and consideration which was due to his rank, and consistent with usage, from all States with whom it was connected but particularly from the Paishwah." Malcolm strongly objected to such proposition. As a result of Sindhia's insistence upon this point he modified it in this way that the British Government, if requested, would employ its "influence and mediation" in the settlement of Sindhia's disputes and differences with other powers. On the sixteenth article Malcolm fixed seventy days for its confirmation and ratification.

Malcolm in his despatch to the Governor-General on February 28, 1804, put the reasons for effecting these changes from the original draft treaty. On his arrival at court he found that Sindhia and his ministers had entertained "great alarm" at many of the conditions of defensive alliance. They thought that it was meant to "destroy the independence of this Government." "Jealousy and apprehension" of the design of the British Government made the task difficult. The situation was aggravated when a *vakil* from Yashwantrao came and requested Sindhia to annul the Treaty of Surji Anjangaon.<sup>49</sup>

At the time of leaving Arthur Wellesley's camp Malcolm was instructed by the General to assuage the minds of Sindhia and his ministers so that the peace, which had been restored, might be confirmed and established. In this task of negotiation Malcolm displayed his patience, zeal and perseverance. He succeeded in removing the doubts and apprehensions entertained by Sindhia and his ministers.

After modification the important clauses of the Treaty of Burhanpur were as follows: (1) Daulatrao Sindhia accepted the broad principles of Subsidiary Alliance (Article 1). (2) If any person or State committed an act of hostility in Daulatrao's dominions, the East India Company, according to the terms of the treaty, would defend it (Article 2). (3) To fulfil the "terms of mutual defence", the East India Company promised to post a body of six thousand regular infantry on the borders of Sindhia's dominions (Article 3). (4) It was agreed further that this subsidiary force should be used for the protection of Sindhia's territories against foreign attack. But this should not be used on "trifling occasions" like the establishment of rebels (Article 6). (5) Daulatrao Sindhia agreed not to commence any negotiation with any principal State without the consent of the British Government. The Company also promised not to interfere in Sindhia's relations with his military chiefs and servants (Article 8). (6) The East India Company pledged to observe the customs and

usages on all points of "intercourse and communication" between Daulatrao and the Peshwa. It also promised to recognise the lands which Sindhia possessed by "*sunnuds* and grants" provided it did not violate the principles of the treaty of peace.

Malcolm presented the treaty to the Governor-General for his approval. But his mind was not free from anxiety. He had doubts whether this modified treaty would receive the Governor-General's approbation. He felt elated when he heard that his friend and admirer Arthur Wellesley approved the treaty. The General wrote: "... I sincerely congratulate you upon the success of your negotiation and Dowlut Row Scindiah. The treaty which you have concluded appears to me to embrace all important objects; and it secures the tranquillity of the possession of the Company and of those of their allies."<sup>50</sup> In the same letter Arthur Wellesley added that he had performed his duties so well that he would earn the gratitude of the East India Company and his country. He became exceedingly happy when he learnt that the Governor-General in Council entirely approved all the stipulations of the treaty of subsidiary and defensive alliance. In conducting the negotiation of this important treaty Malcolm had "manifested great judgment, ability and discretion" and had "rendered a public service of the highest description."<sup>51</sup>

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### CHAPTER III

## Gohad and Gwalior

ON THE conclusion of the subsidiary treaty, the object of Malcolm's mission at Sindhia's court came to an end. But he was to remain there till the arrival of Webbe, who was appointed Resident to the court of Sindhia. Malcolm's duty was to interpret the precise meaning of the treaty and to determine the territorial limits of Sindhia, other feudatory chiefs and the Company. Arthur Wellesley thought that Malcolm could perform this delicate duty well as he knew the character of the Marathas. But in doing this work he faced formidable hurdles which arose out of "territorial redistribution."<sup>1</sup> The trouble cropped up on the question of the restoration of the fort of Gwalior and the territory of Gohad to Sindhia. It was a perplexing problem which strained the relation between the Governor-General and John Malcolm. To have a synoptic view of the entire situation it is necessary to have a clear idea of the geographical position and historical background of Gwalior.

Gwalior is situated to the south of the river Yamuna. Gwalior had fallen into the hands of a petty Jat chief of Dholpur, known as the Rana of Gohad, soon after the third battle of Panipat.<sup>2</sup> The family rose into prominence under Peshwa Bajirao I. After the defeat of the Marathas at Panipat (1761) the Rana established himself as an independent prince. In 1779 Mahadji Sindhia made himself master of the strong hill fort of Gwalior.<sup>3</sup> When the First Anglo-Maratha war broke out the British Government concluded a treaty with Chhatra Singh Jat (1779) with a view to utilizing his dominions as a barrier against Sindhia. The British Government pledged itself to supply him with a force for the defence of his dominion and to restore him the territories occupied by the Marathas. In 1780 Mahadji lost the fort to Major Popham. In 1782 a compromise was effected with Chhatra Singh. According to the terms of the treaty the Rana would possess Gwalior fort and Gohad only; Sindhia would retain the Gwalior district. But the Rana had been found guilty of treachery. So he was left to his own fate. Soon after the withdrawal of the British force, Mahadji Sindhia reoccupied

Gwalior in 1784, and appointed Ambaji Ingle to the command of the fort.

Ambaji Ingle was in Daulatrao's camp when war broke out. He sought Sindhia's permission to proceed to Hindustan to lead the Maratha forces. He was allowed to go. While in the Deccan Ambaji carried on secret correspondence with Colonel Collins through his *Munshi* Makhal Lal. He expressed his willingness to become a "tributary" of the British Government on certain conditions: (1) the districts which he held should remain in his possession and no money should be demanded from him by the English for two years; (2) he should be provided with a body of English troops free of all charges. But Sardesai in his *Riyasat* held Lord Lake responsible for giving him a false hope that the *jagirs* under him would be treated as a separate State.<sup>4</sup> Lord Lake, on the outbreak of war, seduced Perron, Begum Samru and Rajput chiefs like the Rajas of Jaipur and Jodhpur from the cause of Sindhia. Lord Lake along with his troops, Mercer and Baille proceeded to take possession of Gwalior fort, which was held by Ambaji Ingle. Kirat Singh, a descendant of the Rana of Gohad, seized the opportunity of regaining his authority. Under a promise of an ample provision from the British Government Kirat Singh, at the commencement of the war, raised a considerable body of troops with which he successfully opposed the forces of Ambaji Ingle and invaded the country of Gohad. In his utmost embarrassment and in order to secure his own interests Ambaji sent his *vakil* to General Lake on October 19, 1803, with a letter that he should be treated as an independent head of State for the area under his control. General Lake concluded with him a treaty on December 16, 1803.<sup>5</sup> Ambaji "ceded to the British Government and its allies the fortress of Gwalior and the country of Gohad on condition of being rendered independent of Sindhia's authority."<sup>6</sup> The districts ceded by Ambaji Ingle under the second article of the treaty were made over to Rana Kirat Singh by a treaty on January 29, 1804. Kirat Singh (according to article 4) handed over the fort and city of Gwalior to the British Government. It would not be out of place to mention that the fort and the city of Gwalior had been in Sindhia's possession for over thirty years.

Soon after the conclusion of the treaty with Ambaji a British force under Colonel White advanced to take possession of the fort of Gwalior. The killedar refused to surrender that fort to Colonel White. When Ambaji heard that a peace was likely to be concluded he had broken the engagements and used his endeavours to prevent the English from taking possession of forts and districts. The treaty

with Ambaji Ingle became null and void. He persuaded Daulatrao that "his object was to secure the possession of the countries under his charge."<sup>7</sup> It can be concluded that Ambaji's change of mind and decision complicated the case. In the meantime the war with Sindhia came to an end with the conclusion of the Treaty of Surji Anjangaon.

The controversy arose out of the interpretation of the second and ninth articles of the Treaty of Surji Anjangaon. Sindhia as well as his ministers claimed Gwalior and Gohad on the basis of the second article. But, the Governor-General asserted that the ninth article deprived Sindhia of his possessions of Gwalior and Gohad.<sup>8</sup> At the time of making peace with Sindhia neither Arthur Wellesley nor Malcolm knew of the nature of the treaties concluded by Lord Lake with the different chiefs in Northern India. They knew little of what was going on in Upper India. When Malcolm went to Sindhia's court the treaty with Rana Kirat Singh had not been made. This controversy broke out when Malcolm as political assistant to Arthur Wellesley was busy in negotiating the subsidiary treaty at Sindhia's court. Daulatrao Sindhia and his ministers also knew nothing of the treaty concluded by Lord Lake with Kirat Singh. Munshi Kamalnayan and Bapu Vithal Pant, Sindhia's ministers, drew the attention of Malcolm, in February 1804, to the possibility that their chieftain was going to be deprived of the fort of Gwalior and the territory of Gohad. John Malcolm on February 22 wrote to Arthur Wellesley about this fresh claim of Daulatrao and his ministers. Arthur Wellesley referred the case to the Governor-General as the letter included a new point and advised Malcolm to wait till he received the Governor-General's advice.<sup>9</sup>

Munshi Kamalnayan put some arguments in favour of the restoration of the places to Daulatrao. He held that the fort of Gwalior and the territory of Gohad were not "comprehended in the cessions" made to the Company by the ninth article of the treaty of peace. The country of Gohad was Daulatrao's personal property. It was his *Khas Tehsil*,<sup>10</sup> from where the revenues were directly collected from the ryots. The Rana of Gohad was not an independent chief like the Rajas of Jaipur and Jodhpur. The Rana had lost ownership over the district for more than thirty years. No such person as the Rana of Gohad had existed then and the line was extinct. But when war broke out Mercer tried to retain the semblance of *regalia* by installing one member of the Jat tribe as the Rana of Gohad. The *Munshi* pointed out that if the claims of the extinct families were revived, the British Government would have

to create new States on "slender grounds".<sup>11</sup> He also made a distinction between the position of the Rana of Gohad with those of the Rajas of Jaipur and Jodhpur. The latter were independent chiefs who paid tribute to Sindhia, but the Rana was a dependent feudatory.

The fort of Gwalior was a point of the utmost importance to Sindhia. It was a "royal fort held of the king (Mughal Emperor) by the Maharaj."<sup>12</sup> The *Munshi* added further that neither he nor the ministers understood that their chief would be deprived of Gwalior and Gohad. While negotiations were going on, Daulatrao's agent, Yashwantrao Ghorepade, had written to the *Munshi* that their master would retain Gwalior. Ingle's *vakil* also informed the *Munshi* that the fort of Gwalior was in the south of the pargana of Gohad, though it was within the country of Gohad. He asserted that the right of Daulatrao Sindhia over the fort of Gwalior and the territory of Gohad was recognized by the ninth article. After an interpretation of the ninth article it would become clear that territories lying to the north of the States of Jaipur, Jodhpur and the Rana of Gohad belonged to the East India Company and the territories to the south of those countries were to belong to Daulatrao Sindhia. Kamalnayan told Malcolm that this dispute was not a trifling matter, and the cessions would deprive Sindhia of a revenue of thirty lakhs of rupees. Moreover Sindhia would not only sustain this financial loss but would also lose one of the strongest forts in India. An unfavourable decision would reduce Sindhia's position to that of a Jagirdar.<sup>13</sup> Descanting on the British generosity, the *vakil* requested Malcolm to plead the case to the Governor-General favourably.

Bapu Vithal Pant, Daulatrao's another minister, strongly forwarded the case of his master to John Malcolm. He was of opinion that his master would confirm all the treaties which the British Government had concluded with the Rajas of Jaipur, Jodhpur and other feudatory chiefs, who were previously under Sindhia's control. But Daulatrao under the ninth article would not lose the *Khas Sarangam* lands south of Jodhpur, Jaipur and Gohad. He pointed out to Malcolm that the country of Gwalior along with fort and the districts of Bhind, Bhudwar and Kuchwagar, Koorota, Baonee and Bandere and Sikrwar were Sindhia's *Khas Sarangam* lands. These *Khas Sarangam* lands were given now to Kirat Singh. He further told Malcolm that when the ninth article was read, he and Munshi Kamalnayan pointed out to General Wellesley that possibly their master might lose some *Khas* lands. The General

assured them that these *Khas* lands would be exchanged for the other countries belonging to the Company.

On March 29, 1804, Malcolm had a meeting with Bapu Vithal, Bapu Chitnavese and Munshi Kamalnayan. Bapu Vithal opened the discussion on Gwalior and Gohad. Malcolm decided to remain reticent on the subject till he had received the Governor-General's instructions. But Bapu Vithal broached the subject to Malcolm by putting a new interpretation to the ninth article of the treaty of peace to Malcolm. According to Bapu Vithal neither Ambaji Ingle nor the Rana of Gohad came within the purview of the ninth article. They were not independent chiefs but persons who recognised the authority of Sindhia. In the Persian copy of the treaty of peace their relationship with Daulatrao was termed as "*Illakah* and *Ilayet*".<sup>14</sup> Malcolm expressed his surprise at the use of the Persian terms. He knew the language and had stated that *Ilayet* meant obedience or submission. So the use of the terms in the ninth article clearly established Sindhia's relationship with Ambaji Ingle and Kirat Singh. Munshi Kamalnayan then interpreted the terms in a different way. According to him the terms implied that they were "Zamindars" or petty chiefs who "exercised" independent authority within their possessions though they paid tribute or acknowledged the "paramount sovereignty" of Daulatrao Sindhia.

Instead of relying on his agents, Daulatrao pleaded his case personally. To Arthur Wellesley he wrote on May 3, 1804, that the fort of Gwalior and the country of Gohad should be handed over to him according to the stipulation of the treaty of peace. But he came to learn that he would lose Gwalior and Gohad according to the ninth article. With mortification Daulatrao reported the matter to Malcolm and the latter told him to wait till he received the Governor-General's opinions and the list of treaties concluded with different chiefs. The treaties with Ambaji Ingle and Kirat Singh were included in the ninth article of the treaty of peace. But the treaty with Ambaji had been treated as cancelled as he had violated the conditions. Daulatrao asked if one part of the treaty would remain inoperative how the other part of the treaty could be valid?<sup>15</sup> Malcolm furnished him with lists of treaties. The name of Kirat Singh (Bootpowngrie Jaut) astonished him. His acceptance of the treaty would deprive him of his claim on Gwalior and Gohad. He would sign the treaty later when he would get a definite reply from the Governor-General in whom he had confidence. But Malcolm told Munshi Kamalnayan that any refusal or delay on their part would create a doubt in the mind of the Governor-General and the

friendly relations, which existed between them, were likely to be strained. So Daulatrao decided to invoke the assistance of Arthur Wellesley through whom the former wanted to settle the disputed question.<sup>16</sup> Thus it became the prime concern of Daulatrao and his ministers to get back the fort of Gwalior and the territory of Gohad. To them Gwalior was the patrimony inherited by Daulatrao.

But it was reserved for Sindhia and his ministers to be rebuffed by the Company. Arthur Wellesley in his letter of May 20, 1804, to Sindhia asserted the right and claim of the British Government on Gwalior. In the same letter he tried to remove Sindhia's misgivings and suspicions which had led to the controversy. He wrote that he never gave his ministers any assurance on the restoration of Gwalior and Gohad to him at the time of negotiation.<sup>17</sup> What he told them was that Sindhia's possession of Gwalior and Gohad must depend upon the treaties which General Lake had made with the Rajas of Jaipur, Jodhpur and the Rana of Gohad. He quoted the proceedings of the Conference which passed between him and his ministers. He told them that their chief (Sindhia) would not lose Jaipur, Jodhpur and Gohad under the second article of the treaty of peace but he would lose them under the ninth article. It was not his object to insist on anything in the treaty which should "tend to defeat" the arrangements which Lord Lake might have made with the Rajas of Jaipur, Jodhpur and the Rana of Gohad.<sup>18</sup> He wanted to have the river Chambal as the demarcation line. He proposed that everything to the north of that river should belong to the Company and everything to the southward to Daulatrao Sindhia. Arthur Wellesley's interpretation of the controversial ninth article of the treaty of peace was different from that of Sindhia. He admitted that the territory held by Ambaji Ingle and the present State of Gohad were Sindhia's *Khas Saranjam* from where his *Amildars* collected revenue.<sup>19</sup> Ambaji Ingle's violation of the treaty did not change the position. The British Government would gain the advantages from that disputed clause, as there was the distinct reference to the Rana of Gohad. It was only Ingle who would forfeit all the gains. With regard to the position of the Rana of Gohad in the treaty he held that his territories were repeatedly mentioned in the treaty of peace. So he could not be deprived of his present possessions. Sindhia's reluctance would be a breach of the spirit of the treaty of peace. He requested Daulatrao to accept the treaty, otherwise his unwillingness would only delay the operation of the treaty.

Arthur Wellesley in his despatches to John Malcolm gave a different interpretation to this controversial question. He was willing

to recognize Sindhia's right on Gwalior and Gohad, and was in favour of the restoration of these two places to Daulatrao. In reply to Malcolm's letter of February 22 he advised Malcolm to wait for the Governor-General's despatches on Gwalior. He acknowledged his ignorance of the real state of affairs in Hindustan.<sup>20</sup> He had an idea that the State of the Rana of Gohad existed; but after going through the papers he became convinced that it was a case of restoration. "There was the error, and the same error will be found in his (Lord Lake's) own treaty."<sup>21</sup> Major-General Wellesley then questioned the propriety of Lord Lake's concluding a treaty with Kirat Singh. He asked if Kirat Singh was not the Rana of Gohad, his treaty with Lord Lake was a case of fraud.

Major-General Wellesley disagreed with the action of the Governor-General, whose entire theory was based on the treaty concluded with Ambaji Ingle. He thought that such an assumption rested on two erroneous grounds. The first was that Ambaji Ingle held the fort as Sindhia's servant and *Amildar*. The clause in the ninth article, according to him, would deprive the British Government of its claim on Gwalior and Gohad. Secondly, Ambaji Ingle's violation of the treaty would not deprive Sindhia of his claim on Gwalior as that place was not included in the territory of the Rana of Gohad. So the Governor-General's claim on Gwalior failed entirely. He was of opinion that the Governor-General's arguments would be "too ingenious and too much abstracted from all the circumstances of the case."<sup>22</sup> Such a claim, he thought, would induce Sindhia to form an idea that "the powerful party adopts the measures required by its own dignity, interest and safety."<sup>23</sup> In order to maintain good relations with Sindhia, he was ready to give up everything. He wrote to Malcolm on March 17, 1804:

"I would sacrifice Gwalior, or every frontier of India, ten times over, in order to preserve our credit for scrupulous good faith, and the advantages and honour we gained by the late war and the peace; and we must not flitter them away in arguments, drawn from overstrained principles of the Laws of Nations, which are not understood in this country. What brought me through many difficulties in the war, and the negotiations for peace? The British good faith and nothing else."<sup>24</sup>

But it is paradoxical to find a different picture in Arthur Wellesley's despatches to the Governor-General. There he upheld the British Government's right to Gwalior. He requested the Governor-General to reconsider the case and restore the fort of Gwalior to Daulatrao Sindhia. He considered it a "delicate" point



on which rested peace. He pointed out that the arrangements under the ninth article of the treaty of peace would deprive Sindhia of a large portion of territory. *Summum jus* Sindhia would turn into a *Summa-injuria*, Sindhia. So a liberal interpretation of the ninth article was essential, otherwise war might break out at any moment. Major-General Wellesley was not afraid of another war as that would annihilate the power of Sindhia. What he apprehended was that such a renewal of war would be the "greatest misfortune" to the Governor-General. This would give an opportunity to the Court of Directors and the "King's Council" to undermine the "glory of the last year" and denigrate his "whole administration."<sup>25</sup> Arthur Wellesley was aware of the benefit which the British Government would derive from the possession of the fort of Gwalior. The possession of Gwalior was necessary for "offensive operations" in Malwa.<sup>26</sup> But he was doubtful of its efficacy for "defensive purposes." As a General he knew that no fort without a "navigable river" would be of any use against the Maratha armies for mere "defensive purposes".<sup>27</sup> The fort of Gwalior is far off from the Yamuna. In order to effect a navigation there should be a large garrison. Lastly, he put a compromise formula to the Governor-General for a solution of the vexed problems of Gwalior and Gohad. Sindhia should be told plainly that he had lost his right and claim on the fort of Gwalior and the territory of Gohad under the ninth article of the treaty of peace. But the British Government out of consideration of "public faith" would return those places to him provided he would appoint a person to the post of a Killedar to the fort who should be "agreeable to the British Government." Secondly, the British Government would grant some parts out of the old State of Gohad to the Rana for the maintenance.

On a careful study of Arthur Wellesley's despatches it becomes clear that he was not consistent in his thoughts. To Daulatrao Sindhia he observed that the British Government could not restore Gwalior and Gohad to him without a violation of the treaty with Rana Kirat Singh, who was a legal descendant of the Ranas of Gohad. To John Malcolm he wrote that the British Government's legal right over Gwalior was doubtful. He was willing to restore those disputed places to Sindhia. His despatches to Lord Wellesley proceeded on the assumption that the British Government was legally correct in asserting its claim on Gwalior and Gohad. Of course he pleaded for the restoration of Gwalior and Gohad to Sindhia for the continuance of public peace. Outbreak of hostilities on this controversial point would put his brother, the Governor-General, into

troubles. This would give a handle to his brother's critics at home to minimize the gains of the last war. In his despatch to Henry Wellesley he repeated the argument that the British Government had lost Gwalior with the conclusion of the treaty of peace.<sup>28</sup> He admitted that he had difference of opinion with the Governor-General "both as to the right and policy of keeping this fort."<sup>29</sup> He wrote that not only he but also Malcolm, General Lake, Mercer and Webbe were of opinion that the British Government's claim on Gwalior was a lost case.

Munshi Kamalnayan brought this controversial point to the notice of the British Resident at Sindhia's *darbar* on February 21, 1804. John Malcolm, still stationed as Resident, at once wrote about it to the Governor-General and Arthur Wellesley. The latter advised him to wait and avoid further discussion till he would get final order from Lord Wellesley. Accordingly he tried his best to avoid all discussion till his information was complete. Babu Vithal Pant and Munshi Kamalnayan insisted on discussion and asserted their master's claim on Gwalior and Gohad. In the first conference which took place on February 21 on this issue Malcolm reminded them of Major-General Wellesley's remark that their master was "liable to lose Gohad" by the ninth article of the treaty. When the ministers made derogatory remarks like "Impostor" against the Rana of Gohad he protested against it and told them that the Rana was a friend and an ally of the British Government. So Malcolm reminded them that any unwarrantable remark against the Rana would be treated as an unfriendly act against the British Government. He supported and vindicated the rights of the British Government to "contract and maintain engagements" with the Rana of Gohad.<sup>30</sup> Babu Vithal and Munshi Kamalnayan then requested him to plead their cause to the Governor-General. They were of opinion that neither the fort of Gwalior nor several parts of the districts ceded to Kirat Singh formed a compact territory. These had never been considered as a part of the territory of Gohad as they were situated to its southward. Malcolm did not proceed further as he had no sufficient information at his disposal. He complained to the Governor-General and wrote: "I failed to assert the right of the English Government to the disposal of possession in dispute in that positive language which I perhaps ought to have used . . . that a fear that I might from precipitate decision injure that cause which it was my duty to defend."<sup>31</sup> His role at Sindhia's *darbar* up to that time received the approbation of the Governor-General.<sup>32</sup>

But Malcolm's later despatches to the Governor-General revealed his innermost desire which influenced his measures. He tried to assuage the wounded sentiments of Sindhia and his ministers on Gwalior and Gohad and apprised the Governor-General on this delicate issue. Malcolm must have felt compunction in his heart when he observed that Gwalior and its adjoining territories were in Daulatrao's possession at the time of negotiating the treaty of peace and that one of the chief objects, which led Sindhia to sign the treaty, was to prevent the British force from capturing the important fortress of Gwalior.

The entire picture became clear to Malcolm when he got a copy of the treaty which Lord Lake had concluded with the Rana of Gohad, on March 26, 1804. Like Arthur Wellesley he was ignorant of the "precise situation of Gwalior."<sup>33</sup> From the reports of the Secret Committee he had an idea that it belonged to the Rana of Gohad. He thought that the Rana of Gohad was in possession of some small territories in Gohad previous to the war, and was an "exile" from the country of Gwalior. His assumption was based so long on an "erroneous idea" of maintaining and supporting the Rana. He assumed that the Rana of Gohad was a feudatory chief under Daulatrao Sindhia like the Rajas of Jaipur and Jodhpur who paid tribute to Sindhia.<sup>34</sup> But his assumption was wrong. He now realized that it was a case of restoration.

In the course of Malcolm's discussion with the *Munshi* it became clear to him that Gwalior was the chief cause of the "discontent" of Sindhia's Government. To Gohad they did not attach much importance; but the loss of Gwalior would affect the "dignity" and prestige of the State. Sindhia's pride was involved in the "retention of this fortress"<sup>35</sup> Sindhia's *darbar* could hardly reconcile itself to the loss of the fort of Gwalior and the territory of Gohad. In his private letter to Shawe, Malcolm wrote: "The possession of the fort of Gwalior, I believe, is the favourable object of this country."<sup>36</sup> It was a focal point on which rested the peace with Sindhia. He apprehended that war might break out on this point, though he was convinced of British success in case of renewal of the war.

Munshi Kamalnayan and Bapu Vithal requested Malcolm to exert his goodwill on this disputed point. They had given their master assurance about it at the time of concluding the treaty and subsequent to that. The *Munshi* told him that they had claim upon Gwalior on two grounds: justice of the case and the "generosity"<sup>37</sup> of the British nation. As British Resident Malcolm studied the

sentiments of Sindhia and his ministers carefully and came to the conclusion that an unsatisfactory solution of this vital question would strain the British relationship with Daulatrao Sindhia. In his private despatch to Mercer he pointed out that the retention of Gwalior would "interrupt the happy operation of the late alliance which was established with Daulatrao Sindhia."<sup>38</sup> He wrote: "These people do not understand the Laws of Nations and it is impossible to make them comprehend a thousand refinements which are understood and practised in Europe."<sup>39</sup> He suggested that the interest of the British Government could best be promoted by granting a "hill fort" to Daulatrao Sindhia to which he attached the "greatest importance," and the British Government could retain that fort as a "military post" to secure its dominions and those of its allies. He thought that this vital question should best be decided by persons like him who were thoroughly acquainted with it. He observed:

"I should give my voice for the cession of Gwalior to this State, and I should do that on a conviction that it would add little or nothing to its strength in a war against us."<sup>40</sup>

Malcolm now posed before the Governor-General the question of generosity when he emphasized that it was his duty to look after the welfare of Sindhia's State by removing every cause of irritation. He desired that there should be a review of the whole affair and every discussion on this crucial question should be held on the basis of mutual confidence and without any "reserve."<sup>41</sup> There should be no pre-condition. For promoting the interests of the two Governments such a practice would enable the British Residents to overcome "insurmountable difficulties."<sup>42</sup> According to him where doubt existed, the interpretation should be on the weak side. He was eager to earn the goodwill of Sindhia and to secure it he was ready to make considerable sacrifices. His conviction was based on the idea that a powerful neighbour like Daulatrao was preferable to the British Government than a weak and a distracted neighbour like the Rana of Gohad. He requested the Governor-General not to emphasize the "letter" but look at the "spirit" of the last engagement which took place between the two Governments.<sup>43</sup> He held the view that the British Government would gain the gratitude of Sindhia as well as of the Maratha nation, if Gwalior and Gohad were restored to Daulatrao Sindhia. Malcolm did not conceal his personal preference in favour of the restoration of Gwalior to Daulatrao Sindhia.

Malcolm found in Arthur Wellesley a weighty supporter of his view. They both favoured the restoration of Gwalior to Sindhia

and stressed "public faith". They were initially ignorant of the realities of the situation in Northern India. After going through the despatches they became convinced that the case of the Rana of Gohad was one of restoration. Both of them told Daulatrao and his ministers that the restoration of Gwalior and Gohad would defeat the purpose of the British Government; but in the secrecy of official communications they pleaded to the Governor-General for restoring the disputed places to Sindhia.

The Governor-General attached great importance to the possession of Gwalior by the British Government. The retention of the fort, he thought, was highly important to the British Government in "a military as well as in a political point of view."<sup>44</sup> He wrote to Malcolm: "The evident object and operation of the war and peace were to destroy Sindhia's hostile military power" and especially to "exclude Sindhia from all command of our frontier, or of the dominions of our allies, more particularly in the North-Western provinces of Hindoosthan."<sup>45</sup> The main object of the war and of the peace was to destroy Sindhia's military power on the bank of the Yamuna. This plan was formulated by the Governor-General before the commencement of the war and he had given instructions to this effect to Major-General Wellesley on December 11, 1803. His another object was the establishment of the Rana of Gohad under the protection of the British power. A dependent and weak ruler would allow the British Government to have "free navigation" of the Yamuna.<sup>46</sup> So any concession to Sindhia would not only restore his military power and influence on the north-western frontier, but would also encourage him to recover his ascendancy in that quarter. The Governor-General thought that the concession would "furnish the means of renewed war instead of cementing the ties of alliance."<sup>47</sup> It becomes clear that for the possession of Gwalior and the establishment of the power of the Rana of Gohad under British control, the Governor-General would have resorted to any means if the war against Daulatrao had not broken out in August 1803.

Lord Wellesley refuted all the arguments of Daulatrao Sindhia and his ministers on the question of the restoration of Gwalior and Gohad to the Maratha chief. He also justified the treaty which Lord Lake had concluded with Kirat Singh in January 1804. The restoration of Gwalior and Gohad to Sindhia, Lord Wellesley considered, would be a "break of his public duty." The British Government was under "paramount necessity" to fulfil its engagements with the Rana of Gohad as the latter, with the British Government's help, had raised a considerable body of force and expelled Ambaji

Ingle's troops from the territories of Gohad. Except in Gwalior fort there was no force of Sindhia in the Gohad country. The whole thing pivoted upon the Rana whether he should retain Gwalior and Gohad or should give up the claim. To Lord Wellesley it seemed that "sound policy dictated the support of the Rana of Gohad."<sup>48</sup> He thought that without the full command of Gwalior, the British Government would not be able to perform its responsibilities for the security of the district of Gohad. When Sindhia's minister termed the Rana as an "Impostor,"<sup>49</sup> the Governor-General became infuriated. He remarked: "This was an imputation on the honour of the British Government". This was highly derogatory and the British Government would not tolerate such "tone and spirit" of Sindhia's *darbar*. He was not ready to admit the Rana's case as one of restoration. According to him, the Rana was the lineal descendant of the ancient chiefs.

The Governor-General in his bid to retain the strategic places interpreted the disputed articles—the second and the ninth—of the treaty of peace in favour of the Company. He clearly maintained that the country of Gohad could not be considered to be ceded to Sindhia by the second article of the treaty. Under the operations of that article, if Lord Lake had not concluded treaties with Ambaji Ingle or with the Rana of Gohad, "by the terms of which those territories were to be separated from the dominions of Daulatrao Scindiah, those territories would have reverted to the situation in which they were placed with respect to the dominions of Daulatrao Scindiah before the war."<sup>50</sup> Lord Wellesley was of opinion that though the fort of Gwalior and the territory of Gohad were situated to the southward of Jaipur and presumably lay within Sindhia's dominion, yet the "distinct and separate" reference in the treaty to the territories of the Rana of Gohad would require forfeiture of Sindhia's claim on these territories. The ninth article, according to him, had been framed in such terms that it should exclude its operation in this case. Questions might arise as to whether Ambaji Ingle could cede the territories to the British Government without Sindhia's consent, and whether Daulatrao Sindhia was bound to accept such a treaty. Lord Wellesley's explanation was that Sindhia could not act as a guarantor according to the peace treaty.<sup>51</sup> Sindhia was merely to recognize the *fait accompli* and acquiesce in such cessions of territories. Wellesley further held that Ambaji Ingle's violation of the treaty did not deprive the British Government of its right to Gwalior as the Government's right was confirmed under the ninth article of the treaty of peace.

It seems that the entire trouble cropped up with Ambaji Ingle's violation of the treaty. Had Ambaji been faithful to the British Government, the engagement would have prevented the latter from utilizing the benefit which they acquired by it. Lord Wellesley frankly acknowledged to Lord Lake that Sindhia then could not be deprived of "the territories which were wrested from his Amildar".<sup>52</sup>

From the proceedings of the Governor-General in Council it becomes clear that Lord Wellesley attached more importance to the right of the Rana of Gohad. The Rana of Gohad, according to article four of the treaty of January 29, 1804, ceded the fort of Gwalior to the British Government. But the question arises whether Kirat Singh, the Rana, was then in possession of that fort. His family had lost its possession for more than thirty years. He was neither the *de jure* nor the *de facto* ruler of the territories and the fort. In 1805 Kirat Singh himself admitted to Malcolm that the country which was granted to him by the treaty did not belong to him. But the entire argument of the Governor-General was based on an assumption that Kirat Singh was the only person who could give up the claim—an assumption that had been contradicted by the harsh realities.

Up to March 30, 1804, Lord Wellesley was not so insistent on the retention of Gwalior. He was willing to grant Gwalior to Daulatrao Sindhia provided Sindhia would first renounce his "pretensions" to it and as also to Gohad. But neither Sindhia nor his ministers gave up that "pretension". After that date the Governor-General became more "unwilling every hour to part with Gwalior".<sup>53</sup> The more he considered that question the more he was convinced of the importance of retaining that fortress. His Private Secretary Merrick Shawe wrote to Malcolm on April 4: "Lord Wellesley was convinced that Scindiah had not a shadow of right over them."<sup>54</sup>

Malcolm's role in this affair had excited the anxiety and displeasure of the Governor-General. Lord Wellesley was annoyed with John Malcolm for listening to Bapu Vithal's argument upon this controversial subject. As British Resident he ought to have "combated" the proposals in an unqualified manner. He eagerness for conciliating Sindhia and his ministers and his disposition to make considerable sacrifices to secure Sindhia's goodwill, "rekindled Lord Wellesley's displeasure".<sup>55</sup> The Governor-General himself opened all public and private letters from Malcolm. Shawe in his private letter to Malcolm remarked: "The politicians on this side of India did not attach so much importance to the conciliation of

Scindhiah".<sup>56</sup> The retention of Gwalior was of utmost importance to the Governor-General. His Private Secretary in his despatch of April 23, 1804, brought it to the notice of Malcolm that Lord Wellesley was willing to leave Sindhia in a "state of affluence and ostensible respectability not of formidable strength."<sup>57</sup> But the restoration of Gwalior would afford the Maratha Chief opportunities of making attempts upon Hindustan. The Governor General was willing to give Sindhia districts of ten times value in any other quarter of India for the territorial losses which he would sustain as a result of giving up his claim on Gwalior and Gohad.

The Governor-General thought that if Malcolm had opposed with "firmness in the first instance the pretensions of Scindhiah's ministers" to Gohad and Gwalior, they would have abandoned their claim. His liberal attitude towards their "pretensions" had incensed the Governor-General. To Malcolm Merrick Shawe conveyed his sentiments that his friends felt the "deepest uneasiness and concern" for him.<sup>58</sup> Malcolm, according to them, had failed to perform duties as British Resident. He ought to have pointed out the "fraud" practised by Ambaji and Sindhia's ministers in the course of discussion. They resorted to "artifice and treachery" to uphold their cause. The Governor-General gave Malcolm a chance to rectify his mistakes. His Private Secretary warned Malcolm: "If you remonstrate firmly, sharply and with dignity and compel them to execute the treaty according to its true intent and meaning your sins will be forgiven . . . otherwise you will be condemned beyond redemption."<sup>59</sup> The Governor-General's anger reached its peak when he got Malcolm's despatch of April 3, 1804, in which he argued for liberality to Sindhia. Lord Wellesley thought that the Resident's conduct had placed him in an "embarrassing situation", as this would give his enemies at Leaden Hall Street in London an opportunity to frame against him a charge of "injustice and rapacity in insisting upon the pretensions of those possessions in contrary to the opinion of the Resident."<sup>60</sup> When Malcolm wrote to the Governor-General that he was guided by the maxim of "public interest", Lord Wellesley chided him and wrote: "Mr. Malcolm's duty is to obey my orders and to enforce my instructions. I will look after public interest."<sup>61</sup>

Malcolm naturally felt aggrieved as a result of the Governor-General's censure. He felt sore at the cavalier treatment of Lord Wellesley whom he regarded more as a patron than an official boss. But he received charitable comments from his friend and patron Arthur Wellesley who wrote: "You did not deserve such treatment positively." Elphinstone also observed:



"I think Malcolm was quite right in the Gwalior controversy; but right or wrong, his strenuous opposition to the Governor-General in defence of what he thought the cause of justice and good faith, would have done honour to him in any circumstances, in those (matters) of the case, when the Governor-General was his patron, and the men for whom, above all others, he felt the sincerest admiration and devotion; it was an exertion of public virtue as few men of the sternest character could have attained to."<sup>62</sup>

"Even a volcano subsides after an eruption".<sup>63</sup> The Gwalior controversy came to an end on May 20, 1804, when in a conference Bapu Vithal and other principal ministers in the most "solemn manner" declared that the claim to Gohad and Gwalior had been "entirely abandoned" by them.<sup>64</sup> Daulatrao Sindhia had not only "verbally assented to it" but had ratified the treaty of peace in the most "public, formal and solemn manner".<sup>65</sup> The reasons for Sindhia's acquiescence in the British demand were ascribed by Malcolm to his "present reduced state and total want of confidence in Holkar."<sup>66</sup>

Daulatrao Sindhia lost Gwalior and Gohad temporarily. Had the Governor-General listened to the suggestions of John Malcolm on this controversial subject, Sindhia would have thought twice before joining Yashwantrao Holkar after Lord Lake's failure to capture the fort of Bharatpur. The restoration of Gohad to Kirat Singh did not give the expected results as he could fulfil none of the stipulations of the treaty of 1804. Just before his departure Lord Wellesley with deep remorse admitted his failure and expressed his frank opinion that had he remained in office he would be prepared to restore the places in question to Daulatrao Sindhia.

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64. For. Sec. Procs. May 31, 1805; Letters to the Court; Also For. Sec. Cons. June 21, 1804, No. 128; J. Webbe to the Governor-General, May 21, 1804.                      65. *Ibid.*
66. B.M. Add. MSS. No. 13747; John Malcolm's private letter to N.B. Edmonstone, 1804.

senger Khande Mahadev to Nagpur requesting the Bhonsle Raja to join him in his task of defending *Swaraj* and *Swadharma* (Hindu religion).<sup>6</sup> He also sent similar agents to the Raja of Jodhpur, to Ambaji Ingle and several others. He also requested Daulatrao to give up the British friendship and join him in his intended struggle against the British power.<sup>7</sup> But Sindhia in his blind hatred for Holkar transmitted the letters of overtures to Malcolm, Resident at his court.<sup>8</sup> Yashwantrao also wrote to the Raja of Machedi calling upon him to rise against the British power. The Raja handed this letter to Lord Lake. The British General rightly sensed the danger and did not disband the forces which he had engaged in the previous war against Sindhia and Bhonsle. He sought the Governor-General's permission for dealing with Yashwantrao. Lord Wellesley in his despatch to Lord Lake wrote that he was not prepared to "sanction the usurpation" of the rights of Kashirao Holkar by Yashwantrao.<sup>9</sup> He held out two proposals: (1) to restore Kashirao Holkar to the possession of his hereditary rights and secure at the same time a provision for Yashwantrao Holkar and for Kkanderao; and (2) "to consider Yashwantrao as a neutral power and to limit the British Government's proceedings with respect to him to the protection of its territories and of its allies against his encroachments and exactions."<sup>10</sup> Against this proposal of the Governor-General Malcolm had a different opinion. His proposal was that if the British Government would achieve complete success in the event of war against Holkar it should destroy "altogether the power and independence of the Holkar family."<sup>11</sup> According to him that would "simplify the politics and consolidate the peace of India." Malcolm's other proposal was that if the former was not accepted, Holkar should be given additional territories for the maintenance of his troops. The reason, according to him, was that with his limited territorial possessions, it was not possible for the Holkar Government to support "one half of the troops." So for the payment of the army it must resort to plunder. But Malcolm's proposal found no favour with Lord Wellesley.

The Governor-General asked Lord Lake to give a written warning to Yashwantrao to stop his predatory activities. The Commander-in-Chief on January 29, 1804, wrote a letter to Holkar and himself took up a position in the vicinity of Holkar's camp. Yashwantrao through his agents demanded from Lord Lake: (1) that the British Government should not interfere with his traditional claims of *chauth* upon the Indian chiefs; (2) that certain parganas in the Doab and in Bundelkhand such as Etawa and others, should

be restored to him as they belonged to his family; (3) that the British Government should enter into negotiations with him on the same terms as had been already granted to Sindhia.

To Lord Lake such demands of Holkar seemed "extravagant and inadmissible"<sup>12</sup> He turned out Holkar's agents from his camp and advised Yashwantrao to present reasonable proposals. To this rejoinder of Lord Lake Holkar replied, threatening him of the consequences which would befall the British dominions if his demands were not met. The high tone of the demands foredoomed the negotiations to failure. The language of the letter, according to Lord Lake, was "arrogant and unconciliating."<sup>13</sup>

But Lord Lake found himself in an embarrassing position. Yashwantrao kept his army ready. Lake wrote in a private letter to Lord Wellesley:

"I never was so plagued as I am with this devil; he just, nay hardly, keeps within the letter of the law, by which means our army is remaining in the field at an enormous expense; and if we retire he will instantly come on to Jaipur, where he will at least get a crore of rupees, which will enable him to pay his army and become more formidable than he has ever yet been."<sup>14</sup>

While Lord Lake found his position untenable, Yashwantrao ravaged Pushkar and Ajmer. Then he committed acts of brigandage at Jaipur with uncontrolled fury. This was a direct challenge to the British Government as the Raja of Jaipur had already accepted the subsidiary treaty. The whole of Northern India was in a commotion when Yashwantrao murdered European officers like Captain Vickars, Dodd and Ryan. He then discharged all the Europeans and Christians from his service and kept them as prisoners in the fort of Rampura. Phatak justified this action of Yashwantrao on the ground that these Europeans and Christians were trying to go to the side of the British Government and would divulge the secrets of his war plan. The Maratha chief had in his mind the consequences which Sindhia suffered at Assai and other places. The betrayal by the foreign commanders frustrated the efforts of Sindhia. Yashwantrao took precautionary measures before the war started. This was too much for the British Government to swallow. On April 16, the Governor-General ordered the commencement of hostilities against Holkar both in Hindustan and in the Deccan.

To Malcolm this news was heartening. He was desirous of serving under Arthur Wellesley and wrote to him: "If we have a rupture with Holkar, I shall maintain any post you assign me to the last."<sup>15</sup> Malcolm's attitude towards Holkar was stiff. He was not in

favour of showing compunctions to Yashwantrao Holkar, who, according to him, was a "mere robber and must be treated accordingly."<sup>16</sup> Malcolm, in his letter to Arthur Wellesley from his camp, recommended measures for the annihilation of the power of Holkar. He wrote: "Holkar will be mobbed like a jackal."<sup>17</sup> Malcolm seemed to have been prejudiced against Yashwantrao as he did not come into direct contact with him during his lifetime. His information was based on hearsay. He thought that war with Holkar would be but a short and easy affair. But his hopes were belied when Holkar gave a good account in the war.

General Lake advanced against Holkar, sending Colonel Monson with a vanguard one day's march ahead. At the same time Colonel Murray had been directed by Major-General Wellesley to move from Gujarat into Malwa and Daulatrao Sindhia was asked to cooperate. Yashwantrao was forced to abandon his designs against Jaipur and moved in a southward direction. The British forces under Colonel Don occupied Tonk Rampura on May 16, 1804. This was a severe blow to Holkar as it was his base in Northern India. Lake's soldiers had suffered terribly from the intense heat, and believing Holkar's flight too rapid to be followed up, decided to suspend operations against Holkar till after the rains. He decided to withdraw his main army to Cawnpore, the headquarters, and instructed Colonel Monson to occupy and guard the passages of Bundi and Lakheri so that Holkar could not move from the south to Malwa.<sup>18</sup>

Colonel Murray was expected to be in Malwa to hold Holkar in check in cooperation with Sindhia's troops. Colonel Monson, however, was not content with the assigned position; he marched forward beyond those passes into Holkar's territory without sufficient forces. Monson crossed the Chambal and marched by Kota to the Mukundara pass about thirty miles south of Kota. When at the southern end of the pass, he discovered that his provisions had run short. After a short halt there he advanced fifty miles further south to the fort of Hinglajgarh belonging to Holkar. He took possession of the fort on July 2, 1804.

Yeshwantrao Holkar occupied a position in Malwa and exerted himself to collect his "scattered forces". He was badly in need of money. In order to replenish his coffers, he plundered the town of Mandsaur, a rich possession of Sindhia. As Holkar with his artillery was crossing the Chambal, Colonel Monson considered it a favourable opportunity to attack Holkar. But to his utter surprise he found that Holkar had crossed the river unmolested. At this moment he

received an urgent message from Colonel Murray at Badnawar, that as he had no sufficient force to oppose Holkar, he had decided to go back to Gujarat as Yashwantrao was expected to be there. But Holkar changed his course of action; he did not set out for Gujarat. Murray also changed his position. He started for Ujjain and arrived there on July 8. In this predicament on July 8, Monson began his retreat towards Mukundara to save himself from an immediate attack by Holkar. The British officers' plan was miscarried; though Murray and Monson came close to each other, they were hardly aware of it. Monson reached Kota on July 12 in an exhausted and dispirited condition. On July 27, he was forced to retreat to Kushalgarh. Leaving a small garrison at Rampura he reached the Banas river on August 24. The British forces were attacked while crossing the river. They lost their baggage and reached Kushalgarh on August 25. Here Monson was surrounded by Holkar's troops. The British troops were subjected to the repeated attacks of the Marathas. Monson somehow managed to reach the Hindan fort. His Kota regiment was totally annihilated. Worn out with fatigue and hunger the remaining forces reached Agra on August 31.

The disastrous defeat of Monson at Mukundara pass changed the course of the war. The Governor-General's plan got a rude shock. It forced him to rethink his policy. In order to retrieve the loss, he asked his brother to move against Holkar. But he refused to work under Lord Lake. His Indian career also came to an end. He left for England.

Holkar's victory over Monson at Mukundara pass emboldened him to march northwards. He encamped near Mathura and defeated in August a disorderly British force at Agra. Lord Lake advanced from Cawnpore on September 3, 1804, and arrived at Mathura.<sup>19</sup> Yashwantrao did not stay long at Mathura and on October 8 arrived before Delhi. General Lake hotly pursued him. Holkar made a desperate attempt to capture Delhi, but it was defended splendidly by Burn and David Ochterlony. To avoid Lake's attack Holkar crossed the Yamuna with his cavalry. His object was to raid and devastate the fertile Doab and penetrate into Oudh. Lake was confronted with a difficult problem, which he solved by dividing his forces into two. Colonel Fraser with the infantry, artillery and two native cavalry regiments was sent against Dig, while Lake himself pursued Holkar into the Doab. The British General completely surprised and routed Holkar near Farrukhabad on November 17, 1804.<sup>20</sup> The Maratha leader abandoned his former plans of attacking Cawnpore, rapidly recrossed the Yamuna and escaped to Dig. On



November 13, General Fraser, who was mortally wounded in action, completely defeated the rest of Holkar's army at Dig. The command on Fraser's death devolved on Monson, who recovered the guns which he had lost in his retreat at Mukundara pass. Even in the moment of victory, Monson displayed his characteristic policy of indecision. Instead of attacking the fortress of Dig he fell back on Agra. Lake, however, rejoined the army before Dig and captured it on the Christmas Eve. Holkar's army had been completely defeated. He had lost all possessions in the south like Chandore, Lasalgaum, Dhodap and had taken the route for Bharatpur.

Ranjit Singh, the Jat Raja of Bharatpur, openly espoused the cause of Yashwantrao.<sup>21</sup> The Jat Raja renounced his alliance with the British Government which he had made the year before. The Jats were a martial race and resolved to defend their liberty. They welcomed Yashwantrao as a saviour of India and provided him with money and food.<sup>22</sup> The Maratha leader and the Jat Raja took shelter in the impregnable fort of Bharatpur. They began to attack and harass the British forces. Ranjit Singh defended the fort from inside and Holkar charged the British forces from outside. During January and February 1805 the British troops made five or six attempts to storm the fort of Bharatpur, but all these were repulsed with heavy losses.

The news of Holkar's successes at Mukundara pass and Agra gave a ray of hope to Daulatrao Sindhia, who began to think that he could not afford to see Holkar crushed. His *darbar* also underwent a change of personalities. His principal minister Bapu Vithal Pant died. The old minister Munshi Kamalnayan was removed from power. His father-in-law Sharzarao Ghatge became powerful and prominent at the court.<sup>23</sup> This Ghatge was instrumental in forming a united front against the British Government. He met Holkar previously and tried to bring about a compromise between Sindhia and Holkar. Daulatrao was urged by his father-in-law to join Holkar at that moment. It may be mentioned that his General Bapuji Sindhia, who was sent to cooperate with the British army against Holkar, had "openly joined" Yashwantrao.<sup>24</sup>

Holkar's successes created a sensation in the Deccan. An attempt for the revival of united front against the British was made. Daulatrao himself from Saugar carried on negotiations with the Raja of Nagpur. Yashwantrao made an overture to the Shah of Afghanistan to assist him with reinforcements. During the early part of the year 1805 both Sindhia and Holkar through their agents carried on correspondence with the Raja of Kolhapur and the

Patwardhans of the Deccan. They also through the Peshwa's principal servants tried to persuade him to abrogate his alliance with the British Government. The Maratha leaders also appealed to the Governor of Goa to provide them with six thousand European Portuguese troops in their struggle against the British power in India. In return they would give the Portuguese Government "one-fourth part of all the country that may be conquered."<sup>25</sup> They also tried to get help from the French, the enemy of the British, and addressed letters to the French Government with suitable presents of jewels. But these foreign powers did not extend their help and cooperation to the Maratha leaders.

Daulatrao Sindhia during the period followed a double role. Though outwardly he professed friendliness to the British Government, he carried on secret negotiations with Yashwantrao. At that time the British influence at Sindhia's court was waning. Webbe, who had succeeded John Malcolm as Resident, died in November 1804. The management of the affairs of the British Residency devolved on his assistant, Richard Jenkins. The "arrogance" of Jenkins led to a crisis. On November 17, 1804, he haughtily asked Daulatrao Sindhia why he had advanced through the territories of the Bhonsle Raja without the permission of the Resident. The British victories at Dig and Farrukhabad had emboldened him so much that he demanded the dismissal of Sharzarao Ghatge. He further instructed Sindhia to retrace his steps to Ujjain *via* Bhilsa. Sindhia "cloaked his resentment"; but he expressed his desire to return to his capital and pleaded his difficulties in dismissing Sharzarao. Sindhia's submissive attitude encouraged the acting Resident to issue an ultimatum of forty-eight hours.<sup>26</sup> He threatened to quit the camp if the demands were not met within the specified time. Sindhia's Pindaris in reply to this ultimatum attacked the Residency on December 27, 1804.<sup>27</sup> They murdered some members of the Residency. Sindhia expressed his regret for the incident.

In the meantime Daulatrao led his troops secretly and joined the army of Jean Baptiste Filose. The Resident again became infuriated and protested against Sindhia's violation of the treaty of peace. He announced his determination to quit the Maratha camp on January 17, 1805. On January 25, the acting Resident Richard Jenkins and Lieutenant Stewart went to the *darbar* in the evening to bid farewell to Sindhia on the eve of their departure. The Residency was again plundered and attacked by the Pindaris. Among many people including Doctor Wise and Lieutenant Green were seriously wounded. Daulatrao atoned for the incident and promised to punish

the culprits. But Sindhia's guards kept Jenkins and his men prisoners in the Maratha camp for about eight months.

The failure of Lord Lake to capture the fort of Bharatpur created an enthusiasm at Sindhia's *darbar*. Daulatrao proceeded towards Bharatpur and informed the Resident that his object was to effect a settlement between Yashwantrao and the British Government.<sup>28</sup> Sindhia with his five thousand troops went to Sabalgarh. Yashwantrao with sixty thousand troops also joined Sindhia in March 1805. A meeting took place which lasted for two days in a cordial atmosphere. Yashwantrao made a fervent appeal to Sindhia to give up quarrelling among themselves. He pointed out that it was their sacred duty to defend *Swarajya* and *Swadharma*.<sup>29</sup> At Sabalgarh they laid down the following terms for the welfare of the Maratha Empire.<sup>30</sup> (1) Both Sindhia and Holkar should obey the orders of the Peshwa as their master. It would be their duty to re-establish the authority and prestige of the Peshwa which he had enjoyed before the conclusion of the Treaty of Bassein. (2) They would consult each other on any new plan and would carry it out jointly. (3) The lands enjoyed by the other Sardars under the Peshwa should not be disturbed. If anybody would create trouble both Sindhia and Holkar would exert their influence for the settlement of disputes. (4) In passing through the territories of any Sardar one should take care that no damage was done to his property. (5) The tribute from Jaipur and Jodhpur should be collected jointly and shared equally. (6) They would maintain friendship and good terms as their predecessors did. (7) If any one of them (Sindhia and Holkar) would conquer any new territory, it should be divided equally. (8) If a Sardar would extract money illegally from the Maratha States, both Sindhia and Holkar should see that such amount should be returned to the affected person. Thus it became clear that Sindhia recognized Yashwantrao as a powerful chief of the Maratha Empire. To some Maratha leaders it seemed that Holkar was the only person who could guide the nation at that critical moment. It also clearly demonstrated that Yashwantrao for the cause of his country was willing to compromise with his former foe Daulatrao who had given him many troubles. "In short, the meeting at Sabalgarh showed the broadmindedness and talents of Yashwantrao."<sup>31</sup>

But this Sindhia-Holkar accord lasted only for a brief period of two months. During the period Holkar exercised his influence on Sindhia's administration. Though the friendship did not last ultimately, both of them were benefited financially. Ambaji Ingle had immense wealth. Sindhia asked Yashwantrao to extract money from

Ingle. Holkar arrested him and compelled him to pay a fine of fifty lakhs of rupees. The amount was distributed between them.

The prestige of the British Government was sunk to the lowest ebb. Lord Wellesley's expansionist policy became a subject of criticism. The successive reverses proved fatal to the policy of Subsidiary Alliance. "Monson's defeat near Kota, and retreat to Agra, the siege of Delhi and above all Lake's failure to storm Bharatpur broke the spell of Wellesley's magic"<sup>32</sup> His policy added to the financial burden of the Company. Wellesley's aggressive policy and the Napoleonic wars swelled up the Company's debt to a large extent. Wellesley attacked the Company's monopoly of trade and gave them much less by way of investment goods than they expected.<sup>33</sup> So the Court of Directors and the Home Government withheld their support to Wellesley. He was recalled. He was to be succeeded by Lord Cornwallis, who had previously served as Governor-General.

To retrieve the British prestige at Sindhia's court Lord Wellesley decided to send a mission there. It would be led either by John Malcolm or by Graeme Mercer. The Governor-General's choice fell on Malcolm. "It is no exaggeration to say that for many years, whenever any unusual embarrassment arose, whenever there was work to be done, delicate and difficult, demanding an equal exercise of tact and vigour, the common formula of suggestion at Government House" was to "send Malcolm".<sup>34</sup> John Malcolm, who was then Resident at Mysore, was immediately summoned to Calcutta. He was ordered to proceed to the camp of Lord Lake. He was to carry out instructions coming directly from the Governor-General or the Commander-in-Chief. His task would be to detach Sindhia from the cause of Yashwantrao Holkar and to acquaint the Commander-in-Chief with the tactics of the Marathas. He left Calcutta for Lucknow where he reached on May 10, 1805.<sup>35</sup> From there he went to Mathura where Lord Lake had posted his camp during the summer.

Malcolm's task at the camp of Lord Lake was delicate. The most pressing duty confronting him was to secure the release of Richard Jenkins. He wrote a number of letters to Sindhia, asking the latter to release the Resident and his retinue. He threatened him with dire consequences in case of his refusal to listen to the demand. He wrote: "... any delay in the dismissal of that gentleman will be attended in the eyes of the world with indignities to the British Government and discredit to Your Highness."<sup>36</sup> His next task was to detach Daulatrao from the cause of Yashwantrao and to make him realize that a British victory would be of advantage to him.

The release of the Resident and his staff from Sindhia's camp was of immediate concern to the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief. Lord Wellesley gave instructions to Jenkins in his despatches of February 23 and 24, 1805, for the regulation of his conduct and demand from Sindhia his "atonement" for the atrocities committed in December 1804 and January 1805. Daulatrao accordingly expressed his regret for the incidents which took place in his camp. But Sindhia was not detached from the cause of Holkar and the two chiefs maintained close contact with each other. The combined troops crossed the Chambal on April 29. Their intention was to compel the Rajas of Kota and Jaipur, who were British allies, to pay a contribution. The country beyond Kota was laid waste by troops of Sindhia and Holkar. The Raja was compelled to pay a sum of twenty lakhs.

The movements of Daulatrao annoyed Lord Lake, who, in his letters of April 28 and May 12, asked Sindhia to release Jenkins and his retinue within ten days on receipt of the letters. The Resident and his staff, Lake emphasized, should be allowed to proceed to the nearest camp. But Daulatrao remained impervious to the requisite demand of Lord Lake. Without losing patience the British General again pointed out that the confinement of Jenkins and the gentlemen of the Residency was a flagrant violation of the Laws of Nations. Further delay would complicate the situation. He added that Richard Jenkins would cease to act as "a channel of communication" after the specified date.<sup>37</sup> Sindhia remained silent. When Jenkins visited the *darbar* and demanded his release, he found that Daulatrao and his men displayed the spirit of "evasion, perversion and wilful misunderstanding" in regard to the demand of Lord Lake.<sup>38</sup> It seemed that war was likely to break out on this issue.

The British Government did not want to risk war on this issue alone. The Governor-General in Council advised General Lake to "refrain from the prosecution of war" against Daulatrao.<sup>39</sup> They suggested some alternative measures. If Jenkins and the gentlemen of his Residency were not released within a reasonable time, the British Government as a retaliatory measure would publicly prohibit Sindhia's *vakil* at Calcutta from quitting that city and this news would be circulated at every court in India. If Daulatrao did not act accordingly the British Government would then declare the suspension of the payment of the revenues of Dholpur, Bari and Rajkheda payable under the treaty of peace. If even these measures proved "ineffectual" after a "latitude of trial" the British Government would adopt coercive measures such as "resuming all *jagirs*

granted by the treaty of peace and seizing Dowlat Row Scindhiah's possessions in Ahmednagar and attaching Asirgarh, Burhanpur and several other forts near the frontier of Gujarat."<sup>40</sup>

Hardly had Lord Wellesley taken any concrete measure on this issue when he was succeeded by Lord Cornwallis as Governor-General, who arrived in Calcutta on July 30, 1805, and assumed the Government on the same day. The new Governor-General gave up the policy of his predecessor and announced his intention to open negotiations with Daulatrao Sindhia and terminate hostilities with Yashwantrao Holkar. He was even willing to sacrifice the advantages which the Company had gained in the last war in Northern India. To Malcolm this decision of Lord Cornwallis seemed painful. According to him the Governor-General by his declaration was going to "sacrifice national interests" to please the members of the Court of Directors. In his private letter to Shawe, he wrote: "... it was only by the most spirited and decided policy that we can hope to preserve the last advantages we have gained."<sup>41</sup> He thought that any relaxation in the field of military preparation would involve the Government in the "risk of a very serious reverse of fortune." The liberal policy of Lord Cornwallis would lead to the rise of a host of enemies who would dare to attack the territories of the British Government. John Malcolm belonged to the school of Wellesley. He was of opinion that Wellesley's system had brought about a "bond of security" among the States in British India.

Lord Cornwallis in his private despatch of August 14, 1805, to John Malcolm enunciated his political principle and sought his cooperation in implementing it.<sup>42</sup> The Governor-General thought that the British Government would gain little by continuing the war. The war had emptied the treasury and the British Government in India could "send home no investment." He wrote:

"I think that no success could indemnify us for continuing war one moment longer than the first occasion which may present itself for getting out of it without dishonour; that there is no acquisition which we can obtain by it which would not be productive of the greatest inconvenience to us. We are apparently now waging war against two chieftains who have neither territory nor army to lose. Our prospects, surely, of advantage or losses are not equally balanced ... I am reduced to the necessity of taking the very disagreeable step of stopping the treasure destined for China, in order to have a chance of being able to get rid of a part of our irregular forces."<sup>43</sup>

He considered the possession of the person of Shah Alam and the city of Delhi as "unfortunate and useless" events. The Governor-

General was willing to restore Delhi and other possessions of Daulatrao Sindhia in Hindustan. He deprecated the attitude of war-mongers. The Governor-General concluded: "I shall come to the army with a determination not to submit to insult or aggression, but with an anxious desire to have an opportunity of showing my generosity."<sup>44</sup>

Malcolm assured the Governor-General of his faithful adherence to the new policy. But he was quick to change his opinion and expressed to Edmonstone his desire to be relieved from the duty. To him the measures which the Governor-General was determined to undertake for the establishment of peace in India were "disgraceful and ruinous". The principles which Lord Cornwallis was willing to pursue were contrary to those of Lord Wellesley. He wrote that he had never "dreamt that Lord Cornwallis would come to any ultimate resolution upon these points (i.e. abrogation of Subsidiary Alliance with Daulatrao Sindhia and treaties with the Rajas and Chiefs west of the Yamuna, etc.) till he had every possible information before him." Malcolm had laboured much to give "the fullest information upon every subject." Under the circumstances he thought that "an inferior agent" like him who held an opposite view should resign.

The new Governor-General was firm in his decision. To Lord Lake he expressed his desire to revise the Treaty of Surji Anjangaon and bring about a settlement with Holkar. He also apprised John Malcolm with his sentiments. In these letters he emphasized the need of making the river Yamuna as the demarcation line of the Company's territories. He was desirous of dissolving the Company's alliances with the petty States on the west of the Yamuna. He was of the view that Rohilkhand should be retained by the Company as it was necessary for the safety of the fortress of Agra. For the "satisfactory adjustment of all differences" between the British Government and Daulatrao Sindhia he was willing to remove the "obstacles" which stood in the way. On the question of the release of Richard Jenkins and members of the Residency Lord Cornwallis was disposed to "compromise or even to abandon that demand."<sup>45</sup> He expressed his willingness to restore Gwalior and Gohad to Daulatrao and would give up claims on Dholpur, Bari and Rajkheda. According to him the Rana of Gohad had failed to fulfil the terms of the late treaty. Lastly, he was in favour of abrogating the treaties with the Rajas of Jaipur, Bharatpur and Macheri. He also gave a hint that it was not his intention to "renew the defensive engagements" with Daulatrao Sindhia.<sup>46</sup>

To Malcolm it appeared that such a scheme would never bring about permanent peace in India. On the contrary it would

afford "a delusive and temporary relief."<sup>47</sup> He discarded the theory of Lord Cornwallis and considered that the grant of liberal terms to Daulatrao would lead to the establishment of his authority in Hindustan. He wrote: "I believe that if ever we again gave him (Sindhia) a footing in that quarter, his whole policy would be directed to regain his possessions in the Doab, and if that was obtained, to attack Bihar and Bengal. Such . . . would be the inevitable consequences of this system of encouragement."<sup>48</sup> He gave an alternative proposal. According to him the Chambal should be the boundary between the British and the Maratha dominions. Territories to the north of the Chambal should belong to the East India Company and territories lying to the south should be handed over to Daulatrao Sindhia. Dholpur, Bari and Rajkheda should be in the British dominion as they are all to the north of the Chambal. He was in favour of handing over Tonk Rampura to the Raja of Jaipur. The Marathas should have no right of collecting tribute from the north of that river. He was opposed to make the Yamuna the boundary line. He pointed out the disadvantages if the Yamuna was accepted as the demarcation line. It cannot be the boundary for more than "three weeks in a year." During the dry season it becomes "unfordable". He wrote: "During the rains every nallah is as great an impediment as the Jamuna to an invading army."<sup>49</sup>

Malcolm apprehended that the Governor-General's contemplated measures would produce "baneful consequences" from which "no ability, no energy" could save the British in India. For he thought that everywhere liberal measures would be interpreted as weakness. The people would lose their faith in the British promises of protection. In his private despatches to Lord Wellesley on September 15 he emphasized the evils which would ensue as a result of the reversal of his subsidiary policy. He predicted that though Lord Cornwallis's measures at the present moment might bring about a truce, that would be "the certain forerunner of a long and ruinous war."<sup>50</sup> Before he could give a concrete shape to the policy Lord Cornwallis died. Sir George Barlow, the senior member of the Council, became the acting Governor-General.

Barlow did not deviate strictly from the policy laid down by the late Governor-General. In his despatch to Lord Lake he wrote that it was his "anxious desire to establish the permanent security and prosperity of the British dominions in India."<sup>51</sup> He justified the policy of Lord Cornwallis on the relinquishment of the British Government's rights to the territories west of the Yamuna. He was of opinion that it was not the intention of the British Government to



retain all the territories on the west of the Yamuna, ceded to it by the treaty of peace with Sindhia. He held the view that it was the policy of the British Government to accept the Yamuna as boundary of its possessions north of Bundelkhand and the Government would retain some forts and territories which might serve the purpose of effectual defence. He gave instructions to Lord Lake and John Malcolm to establish amicable relationship with Daulatrao Sindhia and to bring the war to an end with Yashwantrao Holkar.

The Maratha leaders could not pursue vigorously the anti-British activities. The contemplated anti-British front received its first jolt when the Raja of Bharatpur signed the treaty with Lord Lake on April 10, 1805. The friendship with Ranjit Singh of Bharatpur was cemented when the fort of Dig was restored to him. Raghuji Bhonsle, who was trying to increase his military strength, also abandoned the cause of Holkar and Sindhia when the Bharatpur Raja deserted them.

In the meantime there was a change of politics in the camps of Sindhia and Holkar. Ambaji Ingle had been released from confinement and was appointed *Diwan* to Daulatrao Sindhia. Ambaji was anxious to bring about a general peace between the "confederated chiefs and the British Government."<sup>52</sup> But Yashwantrao was averse to these measures. Sharzarao Ghatge was forced to quit the camp of Sindhia. Quarrel between them broke out when Daulatrao entertained Shahmat Khan and Wahed Ali Bangash, who quitted the service of Holkar. Sindhia was also offended when Yashwantrao gave shelter to Sharzarao Ghatge. Whatever explanations one might offer for Daulatrao's desertion of Yashwantrao Holkar's cause the reasonable one seemed to be that he (Sindhia) expected "to obtain some concessions from that State (British) as the price of his adopting a line of conduct so favourable to the establishment of the general tranquillity."<sup>53</sup> Sindhia's counsellors like Gopal Krishna tried to convince him that if he would adopt a friendly attitude towards the British Government he might get back Gwalior and Gohad. The separation of these two places from his dominions he could not forget. It seemed to him that the opportune moment had come for the recovery of Gwalior and Gohad.

The apparent unanimity among the Maratha chiefs was at the breaking point when in the middle of August 1805 Holkar finally separated his army from that of Daulatrao Sindhia and encamped his force at Midnapur (near Ajmer). Yashwantrao with his force reached Ajmer on August 20, 1805. He made a last attempt to induce Daulatrao to cooperate heartily with him in his operations

against the British troops. He left Amirkhan behind in Sindhia's camp in order to form some kind of settlement with that chieftain. The negotiation was "attended with little success". Sindhia was not willing to adopt anti-British posture though he made one or two short marches towards the camp of Yashwantrao. But he deserted Holkar. Yashwantrao was betrayed again by Daulatrao in the critical moment of his life. Finding no camp-follower among the Marathas Holkar decided to try his luck in the Sikh territories. From Ajmer he sent off his women and heavy baggage to Jodhpur as a place of safety. He also paid up part of the arrears due to his troops. Holkar's further activities will be discussed subsequently.

Daulatrao displayed his earnestness to settle differences with the British Government. Munshi Kamalnayan, the old and veteran ex-minister of Sindhia, was requested by Lord Lake to take the initiative in the task of negotiation. It would not be out of place to mention that he had to take shelter at Delhi when Sharzarao Ghatge became powerful at Sindhia's court. The task of negotiations fell on Kamalnayan and John Malcolm. The latter insisted on the release of Richard Jenkins and the gentlemen of his Residency before any talk of negotiations would begin.<sup>54</sup> He asserted that "the release of the British Residency was an indispensable preliminary to any negotiation with the British Government".<sup>55</sup> Daulatrao Sindhia wanted to strike some bargain on this point. He thought that the withdrawal of the British Residency from his court might deprive him of the gains which he could expect at that time. When his representative Munshi Kamalnayan sought an assurance from John Malcolm whether his master was likely to receive back Gwalior and Gohad, Malcolm gave a sharp reply. He upheld firmly the cause of his Government and told him that the release of Jenkins was the first and foremost condition of starting negotiation. So if Sindhia was really serious in renewing talks of negotiation the Resident should be released without delay. Good sense ultimately prevailed over Daulatrao and the latter released Richard Jenkins and the members of his Residency on September 13, 1805.<sup>56</sup>

Peace negotiation thus began in a tranquil atmosphere. Daulatrao Sindhia invested Munshi Kamalnayan with plenipotentiary power to start negotiation and make a treaty with the British Government. After talks for nearly two months, on November 23, 1805, a treaty was signed known as the Treaty of Mustafapur. It confirmed most of the terms of the Treaty of Surji Anjangaon with some changes. The main clauses of the new treaty were (1) The British Government never acknowledged the right of Daulatrao Sindhia on

the fort of Gwalior and the territories of Gohad. (2) But from consideration of friendship the Company now handed over the fort of Gwalior and the territories of Gohad to Sindhia. The Rana of Gohad would be given money in lieu of the territories which he surrendered. (3) The river Chambal was to be the boundary line between the two States. (4) Sindhia ceded to the Company all the territories north of the Chambal, which he had acquired by the seventh article of the Treaty of Surji Anjangoan. (5) Certain monetary and other privileges granted to Sindhia under the previous treaty were withdrawn. In lieu of those concessions Sindhia was granted an annual pension of four lakhs of rupees. His wife and daughter were also granted *jagirs* for their maintenance. (6) The British Government and Sindhia were at liberty to negotiate a peace with Yashwantrao Holkar.

The Treaty of Mustafapur was brought about mainly through the instrumentality of Malcolm. He worked incessantly to bring about a satisfactory solution of the thorny problem of Gwalior and Gohad and to make the Chambal the boundary line of two dominions. Moreover in detaching Daulatrao Sindhia from Yashwantrao's cause he gave a severe blow to the anti British front. His service was highly recommended by Lord Lake to the Governor-General George Barlow. "... you can perfectly judge how much his experience and ability have contributed to its favourable conclusion and you will, I am assured, concur with me in thinking that this officer has on the present occasion greatly augmented his claim on the Hon'ble Company and his country. To whose favourable notice I feel confident you will derive satisfaction in recommending the distinguished services of this valuable officer."<sup>57</sup>

The defection of Sindhia and the Raja of Bharatpur did not dishearten Yashwantrao, who made another serious attempt in the Punjab to form another anti-British symmachy. After making arrangements for the members of his family at Jodhpur Holkar marched towards Jaipur territory and entered it on September 14.<sup>58</sup> This time he showed his forbearance and asked his soldiers not to plunder and molest the Rajput territories. His object was to conciliate the Raja of Jaipur and to induce him not to oppose his progress through his dominions if he was not willing to aid him. But the British forces were hotly pursuing him. Yashwantrao considered that the Punjab was more safe than other territories and the martial spirit of the Sikhs attracted him there. On October 2, 1805, Holkar marched from Dadra and took a western course in the direction of Patiala. It is said that he was assured of help from the Sikhs and the Afghans. The

Raja of Patiala was not on good terms with his queen. He asked Holkar to arbitrate and promised to pay him money if he could bring the dispute to a satisfactory conclusion. As Holkar could not decide it, the Raja did not pay him the promised money. So Yashwantrao plundered his territories. He crossed the Sutlej on November 27 and moved in a north-westerly direction to Nagarkot to establish an alliance with hill Rajas. Holkar's crossing of the river surprised and astonished the British troops.

Meanwhile the British troops under Lord Lake and John Malcolm proceeded towards the Punjab. Lord Lake with his army reached Patiala but could not cross the river as it was unfordable. On November 29, Holkar reached Bajwara near Hoshiarpur. The small Sikh chiefs showed their inclination to support him. He had sent Bhao Bhaskar as his agent to Amritsar to reconcile Ranjit Singh. Bhao Bhaskar reached Amritsar on December 3, 1805. Holkar promised Ranjit Singh "a subsidy of twenty lakhs of rupees should he co-operate against the English."<sup>59</sup> Despite the favourable attitude of the principal Sikh chiefs to Holkar's cause their "irresolute and fluctuating" counsels prevented them from taking a "decided plan of action."<sup>60</sup>

The rapid march of Lord Lake alarmed Yashwantrao. The British General took all possible measures to intercept Holkar before he could cross the Beas river. To the "mortification" of Lord Lake the Maratha leader crossed the river and continued his march towards Amritsar.<sup>61</sup> On December 10, Yashwantrao entered the city of Amritsar and sought the protection of Ranjit Singh. His meeting with Ranjit Singh was very interesting. In order to secure Sikh support and goodwill in his struggle against the British power he expressed his willingness to embrace the Sikh religion. To the assembled Sikh chieftains he informed that "should he be disappointed, their conduct would drive him to the extremity of turning Muhammadian and throwing himself upon the protection of the Afghan monarch".<sup>62</sup> This had a magical effect on the assembled chieftains who forthwith "pledged themselves never to forsake him or abandon his cause."<sup>63</sup> It seemed that Holkar's endeavours were crowned with success. The Sikh chiefs as well as the "priest and people" of Amritsar became converts to his cause.

The British Government was confronted with a new danger. Lord Lake and John Malcolm occupied a position thirty-five miles from Amritsar and forty-five miles from Ludhiana. They threatened Ranjit Singh of the fatal consequences which he would face in supporting Holkar. This ultimatum had a curious effect on the Sikh

chief, who despatched two *vakils* to Lord Lake's camp. The *vakils* told the British General that their master would send Holkar out of his territories very soon. Lord Lake also sent his agent Bhag Singh to Ranjit's court. For three days the agent worked upon Ranjit's mind and succeeded in bringing him to a "proper sense of his real interests."<sup>64</sup> The Sikh chief deserted the cause of Yashwantrao, whose anticipated help from Shuja-ul-Mulk, the Afghan ruler, proved to be illusory as the latter was "deeply engaged in settling internal troubles."<sup>65</sup> The *vakil* from the Afghan ruler visited him and advised him not to oppose the English till the Afghans joined him. So he had to give up the plan of further resistance. In a "despondent tone" he wrote to Bharmal Holkar that every Indian leader was trying to save "his own skin".<sup>66</sup> At last in December 1805 he sent his agents like Sheik Habibullah and Balaram Seth to the camp of Malcolm to convey to him the most sincere desire, on his part, to conclude a treaty with the British Government.

The Governor-General in his despatch of November 20, 1805, gave a guideline to Lord Lake to start negotiations with Yashwantrao. He emphasized that all the territories which Holkar possessed before the commencement of the war should not be restored to him. He thought that such "an unlimited concession would obviously subvert the foundation of other arrangements" like public faith and general amity.<sup>67</sup> According to the Governor-General's instructions Yashwantrao Holkar would lose all his control on the territories south of the Tapti. The fort of Chandore and the territories in Malwa might be ceded to the British Government or the clause of the treaty would be modified in such a way so that Holkar might not retain a large number of troops. "The district of Tonk Rampura under no circumstances could be restored to Holkar."<sup>68</sup> It occupied a very strategic position. "Independently of its local position with respect to Jyengur (Jaipur) and other territories north of the Chambal, the disposal of that district is now inseparately connected with the dispensing arrangements between the British Government and Sindhia."<sup>69</sup> Except these forts and territories the British Government would have no objection to restore the remainder of territories to Holkar.

The instruction of the Governor-General made the task of John Malcolm easier. In his work of negotiation Malcolm exhibited his usual diplomatic tact and patience. In the conference which took place on December 20, 1805, Malcolm told Balaram Seth and Sheik Habibullah that in the proposed treaty Holkar might lose some parts of his territories in Hindustan and Bundelkhand. Their master must give up all his claims on the possessions south of the Tapti. In the

discussion Malcolm laid stress on "security."<sup>70</sup> Yashwantrao must not maintain an army "disproportioned to his means." He suggested as a "best proof of sincerity" that Holkar should disband a part of his army.

Holkar's *vakil*, Sheik Habibullah, told Malcolm that their master could never think of giving up the "ancient possessions of his family." The larger parts of his territories were on the south of the Tapti.<sup>71</sup> In the proposed terms the Sheik observed that his master was going to lose territories of fourteen lakhs in Malwa and of over forty lakhs south of the Tapti, which were his *Khalsa* lands. He also expressed Holkar's sentiment on Tonk Rampura and his right to collect tribute from the State of Jaipur. Their master would never relinquish these rights. This infuriated Malcolm who closed the meeting with a remark that further discussion was "needless".

Despite Malcolm's peremptory attitude another meeting was held on December 23, 1805. The *vakils* expressed their master's sincere desire to conclude a peace treaty with the British Government. Malcolm remarked that the desperate condition to which Yashwantrao had been reduced forced him to seek the protection and alliance of the British Government. The Sheik denied the contention of Malcolm and told him that Holkar's sincere desire to "restore his numerous adherents to their homes" prompted him to conclude a treaty with the British Government. Malcolm then read the draft of the treaty and asked if they accepted in principle the terms of the treaty. He did not fail to point out that minor modifications might be incorporated in the treaty but no major change would be made. Balaram Seth and Sheik Habibullah replied that they accepted in principle the terms of the treaty. But they attached great importance to Tonk Rampura. Balaram Seth told Malcolm that the territories had belonged to the Holkar family for sixty to seventy years. Sheik Habibullah pointed out that the present treaty would deprive Yashwantrao Holkar of his right of collecting tribute from the State of Jaipur. In reply to their arguments Malcolm established the claim of the British Government. Tonk Rampura is in the north of the Chambal, Malcolm observed, and the object of this demand was "neither the acquisition of revenue nor power, but the establishment of a clear and distinct line of demarcation between the Marathas and the British Government."<sup>72</sup>

The envoys used various expedients to secure favourable terms for their master from John Malcolm. But the latter was firm in his attitude and did not budge an inch from the instructions which the Governor-General gave. At last on December 24, 1805, the treaty,

known as the Treaty of Rajghat, was concluded with Yashwantrao Holkar. The terms of the treaty were the following:

(1) Making Chambal as the demarcation line Yashwantrao Holkar ceded to the British Government the districts of Bundi, Lakheri, Bhaugaon situated to the north of the river.

(2) The East India Company pledged itself not to interfere with any of Holkar's possessions on the south of the Chambal.

(3) The British Government agreed to sever its connections with "the ancient possessions of the Holkar family in Mewar, Malwa and Harauti or with any of the State south of the Chambal, except the fort and parganas of Chandore, the parganas of Ambar, Seagham and the villages and parganas south of the Godavari."

(4) He was never to admit any European or American into his service without the knowledge of the British Government.

(5) He was allowed to return to his dominions by a particular route but he was not to commit any depredation on his way, either in the Company's territory or that of the Company's allies.

(6) By a special clause of the treaty he promised not to admit Sharzarao Ghatge into his service.

(7) If Holkar could give a good account of his conduct, then after eighteen months the fort of Chandore and Tonk Rampura would be handed over to him.

In dictating these terms to Yashwantrao Holkar, Malcolm proved himself an able diplomat. His services were highly appreciated by Lord Lake and the Governor-General. In his despatch to the Secret Committee Sir George Barlow recorded his appreciation of Lieutenant-Colonel Malcolm's conduct. "The merits and services of that able Officer", he wrote, "are already well known to your Hon'ble Committee, but I trust that his exertion on this occasion will appear to your Hon'ble Committee to have augmented his claim to public approbation."<sup>73</sup>

The Governor-General showed "unexampled liberality,"<sup>74</sup> in restoring Tonk Rampura and other neighbouring districts to Yashwantrao Holkar. It may be mentioned that Holkar gave up the claim according to the second article of the Treaty of Rajghat. As Yashwantrao attached great value to those places, the Governor-General annexed to the ratified copy of the treaty a declaratory article by which the British Government relinquished all claim on Tonk Rampura and other contiguous districts.

The Governor-General in his despatch to Lord Lake on November 20, 1805, had urged him not to give up the British Government's claim on Tonk Rampura and other such districts in

their vicinity. Why did the Governor-General change his mind? George Barlow in his despatch to Yashwantrao on February 5, 1806, wrote that his object was to create in the Maratha chief's mind the most perfect confidence in the moderate and amicable view of the British Government. This concession would ensure the "friendship and goodwill of Holkar."<sup>75</sup> He thought that Yashwantrao in near future would not try to disturb the tranquillity of British India.

Lord Lake and Malcolm protested against the decision of the Governor-General. Lake thought that the restoration of those places gave a "decisive blow to the system of political and military defence."<sup>76</sup> In his despatch to the Governor-General he did not fail to point out that the "motives of this great concession will be misunderstood" by Yashwantrao Holkar. This would encourage Holkar to "generate further demands" and the Maratha chief would again establish "command on the approaches to Hindustan" and would turn the territories to the west of the Yamuna into a "state of constant field preparation."<sup>77</sup>

Sir George Barlow in his despatch of December 14, 1805, to Lord Lake expressed his desire to dissolve the alliance with the Raja of Jaipur. He also by another letter to the Raja of Jaipur wrote that the defensive alliance, which existed between the two States, would no longer exist. The Governor-General complained that while war against Holkar was going on, the Raja did not actively help the British forces. When his kingdom was attacked the British forces, according to the terms of the treaty, not only repelled the attack but also protected it. But later on when Holkar's forces came to the north, the Jaipur forces remained inactive, no part of them joined the British army and even made no attempt to cut off the supplies of the Maratha troops.<sup>78</sup>

The Governor-General's arguments were found to be irrefutable. Lake admitted that the Jaipur Raja's conduct during the war against Holkar "was at variance" with his engagements. But his representation to the Raja was attended with complete success. Later on Lake received supplies from his country, the British officers got aid and cooperation, and even maintained a position in his State which led to the British success. So he considered the dissolution of the alliance with the Raja of Jaipur would expose the State to the "immediate attack" of Sindhia and Holkar.<sup>79</sup>

Malcolm could not justify this action of the Governor-General. He thought that the punishment which the Raja got was far greater than his offence warranted. But it should be mentioned that "the resolution to dissolve the alliance with Jynegur was adopted long



before the conclusion of the war with Holkar.”<sup>80</sup> According to Malcolm the British Government had taken this sort of harsh measure for the first time in India.

The Raja of Jaipur was all but disappointed. In a memorandum to Lord Lake he expressed surprise that he had been punished even for his faithful service to the British troops. He had made every exertion to prove himself worthy of the friendship of the British Government.

The Raja sent his *vakils* to Lord Lake and John Malcolm and requested them to exert their influence on the Governor-General so that the latter might waive his decision. Metha Lal, the *vakil*, presented a letter from the Raja to Lord Lake. In the letter the Raja made an appeal to them praying that he should be saved “from that ruin which might result from his being delivered to the Marhattas.”<sup>81</sup> The Raja thought that the “British Government had from consideration of convenience sacrificed a faithful ally.”<sup>82</sup> He reiterated that he was not conscious of any breach of faith. The existing political system had left him unprepared to oppose Holkar. Metha Lal also echoed the sentiment of his master and said that the Raja must solely depend for the future safety and tranquillity of his possessions upon the clemency and generosity of those enemies whom he had so highly irritated by his unfortunate connection with the British Government. In his frank and undiplomatic attack against the decision of the Governor-General he stated that had his master known beforehand the intention of the Governor-General he could have availed himself of the Maratha friendship. To him it became clear that the British Government would never hesitate to leave him in a perilous situation if that was found advantageous to British interests.

The Raja of Jodhpur also sent his agent Fatehram to the Resident at Delhi soliciting British alliance against the Marathas but this was turned down.

Notwithstanding these protests, the Governor-General was firm in his decision. On February 13, 1806, he directed Captain Sturrock, the officiating Resident at the court of Jaipur, to “quit” Jaipur. After annexing declaratory articles to the Treaty of Rajghat Sir George Barlow recognized Sindhia’s and Holkar’s right of protectorate over the Rajput States.

Thus Barlow left the Rajput States to their fate and exposed them to Maratha aggrandizement. The Rajputs were not strong enough to protect themselves against the Marathas. Malcolm thought that Barlow thus unconsciously laid the foundation of the

Pindari and the last Maratha war. He was of opinion that the Governor-General's policy released the British Government from its task of protecting the Rajput States and the smaller States in Central India which became a prey to the Pindaris. The withdrawal of British alliance from Jaipur and other Rajput States freed the Marathas and the Pindaris "from any apprehension they had hitherto felt in their mind about plundering Jaipur and threatening peace in other quarters of India."<sup>83</sup> The Second Maratha war destroyed the Maratha authority in Central India without putting anything in its place. The importance of the free-booters increased as the Maratha chiefs sought to recover their losses by intensifying plunder, while the Company's policy of non-interference gave them a free hand in Malwa and Rajputana.

"The arrangements made by Lord Cornwallis and his successor, Sir George Barlow", writes S.M. Edwardes, "amounted practically to a renunciation of most of the Company's gains for the sake of a hollow peace and to the abandonment of the Rajput States to the cruelty of the Maratha hordes and their Pindari allies."<sup>84</sup>

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80. For. Sec. Procs. April 17, 1806; N.B. Edmonstone to John Malcolm, April 12, 1806.
81. *Ibid.*, Cons. No. 38; John Malcolm to N.B. Edmonstone, March 26, 1806. 82. *Ibid.*
83. Ghosh, Biswanath, *British Policy Towards the Pathans and Pindaris in Central India*, p. 35.
84. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. V, p. 375.

## CHAPTER V

# The Pindari War

THE origin of the Pindari War and the last Maratha War warrants a close study of the treaties concluded in 1805 between the East India Company on the one hand and Daulatrao Sindhia and Yashwantrao Holkar on the other. The declaratory articles which George Barlow added to the Treaty of Rajghat gave Sindhia and Holkar the right of collecting tribute from the Rajput States. The sovereign right of Sindhia and Holkar over the Rajput States was recognized in the Treaty of Rajghat. The withdrawal of British support and help from the Rajput States freed the Marathas and free-booters from any apprehension they had so long felt. They became free to carry on their devastation in Malwa and Central India. Malcolm was not blind to all these portents of trouble and he protested against the decision of the Governor-General. "These were meant to emancipate us," remarked Malcolm: "from the care and hazard of defending allies and occupying or guaranteeing territory that was supposed to be inconveniently situated. The moment peace was concluded, an indiscriminate reduction was made of all those bodies of irregular horse (natives of our newly conquered provinces) who had been entertained during the war, or had come over at our invitation from the enemy. These finding themselves without any provision whatever, immediately left Hindustan, and swelled the ranks of the free-booters who began at this period to collect in Malwa."<sup>1</sup>

These free-booters came to be known as the Pindaris. They became a formidable power in the first decade of the nineteenth century. A few words about the Pindaris—their origin, their strength and centre of activities—may not be out of place here.

No definite information is available about the origin of the Pindaris. Richard Jenkins, Resident at Nagpur, in 1812 prepared a memorandum regarding the Pindaris. According to him, "the origin of the Pindaris is involved in some obscurity . . . they are of Rohilla or Pattan extraction."<sup>2</sup> Tod gave a literal definition. He was of opinion that the term "Pindari" is derived from the word "Pindarraḥ",<sup>3</sup> which implies that they were in "menial employment". According to him it was a combination of two Hindi words "paiend"

that means "a road" and the verb "aroo" which means to "shut up".<sup>4</sup> From these words he drew the conclusion that the Pindaris were unlicensed free-booters. Malcolm was of opinion that the Pindaris were "formed of adventurers and freebooters of every class and denomination."<sup>5</sup> According to Irvine the word "Pindari" comes from a place or region called Pandhar. The Pindari was not a tribe; it was a military system. The European scholars had a misconception of the Pindaris.

According to Richard Jenkins, the ancestors of the Pindaris settled first in the district of Bijapur. They served first under the Muhammedan dynasties of the Deccan. On the dissolution of these dynasties, they entered the service of the Marathas. "Their employment is said to have been, to accompany the *Bheena Wallah* (or Quarter-Master-General), to go out with foraging parties, and to assist in supplying the bazars with grain, besides performing other services of a plundering body suited to the maxims of a predatory warfare."<sup>6</sup> The Pindaris accompanied the Marathas in the battle-field as auxiliary force. As they did not form a part of the regular army, they often stayed away from the actual warfare. Their plundering activities would begin only after the enemy had been attacked and vanquished. Rather than pay them for their service, their masters themselves claimed one-fourth of their booty in the name of what was known as the *Palpati* tax. *Palpati* tax apart, the Pindaris had to pay also a tent-tax at the rate of 3 to 5 rupees per tent for being allowed to live in the Maratha camp.<sup>7</sup> It is worth noting here that the Pindaris had no settled home or territory during this period.

The principal weapons which they used to carry at the time of march were "long spears, swords and shields".<sup>8</sup> "Each horseman carried a few cakes of bread for his own subsistence and some feeds of grain for his horse."<sup>9</sup> "They were not encumbered with tents, bazars or baggage of any description . . . their saddle clothes were their beds: both men and horsemen were accustomed to endure extraordinary fatigues".<sup>10</sup> They could march long without halting. "They avoided fighting, for they came to plunder, not to fight"<sup>11</sup> Indiscriminate looting was their only object. They carried off everything which was valuable and easy of conveyance, what they could not carry off they only destroyed.

After their return from plunder they cleared off their debts to merchants and others from whom they had taken advances. The remaining goods were then exposed for sale. Malcolm observed:

"Traders from every part came to make cheap bargains, and while the women were busy in disposing of their husbands' property,



the men, who were on such occasions certain of visits from all their friends, were engaged in hearing music, seeing dances and drolls, and in drinking. This life of debauchery and excess lasted till all their money was gone; they were then compelled to look for new scenes of rapine, or, if the season was unfavourable, were supported by their chiefs, or by loans, at high interest, from merchants who lived in their camps, many of whom amassed large fortunes".<sup>12</sup>

Tod said that the founder of the Pindaris was "Nusroo, a mussalman of Turki tribe."<sup>13</sup> He was in the service of Shahji, father of Sivaji, probably in 1633. He was attached to the artillery. After a long period of service he was promoted to the post of *Jamadar*. After his death his son "Chiknie Khan and his grandson Gaze or Dein Khan," better known as Ghazi-ud-din, served under the Marathas. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Pindaris accompanied the Marathas in their operations against Aurangzeb. They plundered the Mughal territories in the south and, in the reign of Shahu, assisted the Marathas in attacking the Carnatic and Vellore.

Ghazi-ud-din and his followers accompanied Baji Rao I in his invasion of Malwa in 1730. Ghazi-ud-din left two sons—Gardi Khan and Shahbaz Khan. Gardi Khan and his followers entered the service of Malharrao Holkar; while the younger Shahbaz Khan with his followers joined Ranoji Sindhia's army. Thus the Pindari power was divided into two divisions—*Holkar Shahi* and *Sindhia Shahi*—and actually formed an integral part of "the strength of their Highnesses." Sydenham observed: "The nature of their connection with Holkar and Scindia appears vague and indefinite, and the influence and authority of those princes over any of the Pindaris seems too weak and uncertain."<sup>14</sup> When they became strong they never hesitated to attack their benefactors.

They rendered no insignificant service to the Marathas at the battle of Panipat in 1761.<sup>15</sup> They suffered equally with the Marathas in the battlefield. In the first Anglo-Maratha war, they helped the Maratha forces at Talegaon. In the battle of Kharda in 1795, they took an active part. Thus the Pindaris were "a convenient ingredient of the system of warfare developed by the Marathas" in the eighteenth century. After the battle of Kharda a change was noticeable. "They are said to have established on the banks of the Nerbuddah and from that period to have increased progressively in consequence and power."<sup>16</sup>

In the first half of the nineteenth century the Pindaris came into Indian politics on a cross section and taking advantage of the

warning power of the Marathas and other Indian princes, they strengthened themselves and counter-balanced the British. The factors which led to growth of the Pindaris as a formidable power were:

First, the fall of the leading States allured these free-booters to plunder the countries. The States were not strong enough to protect themselves against the Pindaris.<sup>17</sup>

Secondly, the conflict between Sindhia and Holkar for a hold on Maratha politics enabled the Pindaris to strengthen their power and position. When Maratha control over Indian States was relaxed, the Pindaris immediately attacked those States.

Thirdly, the second Anglo-Maratha war gave a severe blow to the power of the Marathas. This gave the Pindaris an opportunity to free themselves from the nominal control of the Maratha masters. Malcolm attributed the growth of the Pindari power to "... the destruction of the power of Tippoo Sultan, the extinction of the political independence of the Nizam and (the) Paishwah, and the reduction within narrower limits of the power of Sindhia and Holkar, that added to their number, and by freeing them in a great degree from that control to which they were before subject, gave them not only a wide sphere of action but a character of greater boldness and enterprise."<sup>18</sup> This clearly demonstrates Malcolm's deep insight into the political situation of the country. He understood the full implications of the rise of the Pindaris as a political force and explained in his own characteristic way the growth of their power.

In the early part of the nineteenth century the principal Pindari leaders were Karim Khan, Chitu Khan, Dost Muhammad, Imam Baksh, Kadir Baksh, Saheb Khan and Bahadurkhan. They were still known as *Sindhiashahi* and *Holkarshahi* Pindaris, though their dependence and allegiance to their masters and patrons were nominal. The notable Pindari leaders under *Sindhiashahi* were Chitu Khan, Dost Muhammad and Karim Khan.

Chitu Khan is said to have been the son of a Jat. He was purchased by "Dobble Mehr," who was a horseman in the *durrah* of Buran. Chitu Khan then entered the service of the great Pindari leader Buran. Chitu was first noticed and promoted by Raghuji Bhonsle II of Nagpur. He then entered the service of Daulatrao Sindhia. In recognition of his services Daulatrao awarded him the title of *Nawab Kamal Muhammad Mustoo Karim Jang*. His relations with Sindhia were strained for a short period. Daulatrao arrested him in 1807 and released him in 1811. He was a man of middle

stature and had a complexion neither very dark nor fair. He had no hair on his head. He sometimes wore short Maratha drawers and sometimes Muslim's long drawers. But he had a turban always in the Pathan fashion. He had a son named Muhammad Punah, who had also served in his *durrah*. By 1814 Chitu's *durrah* consisted of 10,000 horse, 1,500 infantry and 17 guns. His name was a terror to the people of Central India in those days. The place of his cantonment was Satwas in the vicinity of Hindia. In 1811 Sindhia granted him *jagirs* at Arome, Shadhorwrah.<sup>19</sup>

Karim Khan was the son of Sher Khan. He was sometimes in the service of Hayet Muhammad Khan, the Nawab of Bhopal, who gave him some parganas in his dominions. He was a notable Pindari leader of the *Sindhiashahi*. He had a quarrel with Chitu, who tried to assassinate him. Karim Khan then sought Holkar's help. His relations with Sindhia changed from bad to worse. He did not fulfil the monetary demands of Sindhia. In August 1807 Daulatrao by a trick arrested him. By 1814 Karim Khan's *durrah* consisted of 6,000 cavalry, about 5,150 infantry and 15 guns. In 1811 Daulatrao Sindhia had granted him *jagirs* at Khira, Sitalbari and Bomasa. He was a man of middle stature and had a dark complexion. He used to dress like a Maratha and wore a turban in the Rajput fashion.

Dost Muhammad was the son of the great Pindari leader Hiru (Heeroo). Dost Muhammad inherited the *jagirs* of his father in the Narmada region. He had no good relations with his patron Daulatrao Sindhia and with other Pindari leaders. His *durrah* consisted of 4,000 cavalry, about 1,200 infantry and 9 guns. His brother Wasil Muhammad, who played a vital role in the Pindari war, was in his *durrah*. He had a fair complexion and wore a plain turban. Daulatrao Sindhia granted him a *jagir* of Rs. 95,000 at Bagrode and Dhamnode.<sup>20</sup>

The principal Pindari leaders under *Holkarshahi* were Imam Baksh and Kadir Baksh, Sahebkhani and Bahadurkhan. Imam Baksh was the son of Lali Muhammad. His grandfather "Nuthoo" (Nutu) was in the service of Malharao Holkar. "The family was considered to be of the real Pindarry caste, that is, from time immemorial to have been Pindaris." He was short in stature. He had a fair complexion. In his *durrah* there were 2,000 horsemen, 1,000 infantry and two guns.

Kadir Baksh was the son of "Munoo". He was a brave and enterprising Pindari leader. He had in his *durrah* 2,150 cavalry, 800 infantry and four guns. Saheb Khan and Bahadurkhan were leaders of less considerable importance. They had in their *durrahs*

only 1,060 cavalry. From Richard Jenkins Memorandum (1812) we come to learn that the total number of Pindaris employed under the principal Pindari leaders was nearly 60,000.

Till the first decade of the nineteenth century the Pindaris attacked the Indian States only and had taken care so far not to violate the British territory. The Pindaris soon extended the area of their plundering activities. In 1812 they attacked Surat and a territory near Mirzapur, which belonged to the British Government. In 1815 the Pindaris plundered the villages of Malkapur in Berar and the commercial towns of Pauni and Hinganghât. In 1816 they attacked and committed acts of violence in the British district of Guntur. As a result, people living in Central India, to whom the very name of the Pindaris was a terror, became panicky. The Pindaris were now a threat to public peace even in British territory.

No paramount power like "the British Government could overlook or leave unpunished" the Pindaris.<sup>21</sup> After a careful study of the problem, Lord Moira decided to wipe out the name of the Pindaris from the pages of history. In his despatch to the Court of Directors on April 10, 1817, he expressed his "unalterable determination to extirpate the Pindaris from their present haunts and to take measures against their re-establishment in any part of India."<sup>22</sup> He gave a brief account of the brutal activities of the Pindaris to the Secret Committee: "It was not rapine alone, but an unexampled barbarity that marked the course of the spoilers. Their violation of the women, with circumstances of peculiar indignity, which made multitudes of the victims throw themselves into wells or burn themselves together in straw huts, was invariable; and they subjected the male villagers to refined tortures, in order to extract disclosure where the little hoards of money were buried."<sup>23</sup>

Having made up his mind to exterminate the Pindari power, Lord Moira had two plans. The first was to isolate the Pindaris and the second was to form a league, consisting of the principal States of India with the British Government at its head. The members of the proposed grand confederacy would be asked to surrender their right of making war or treaty with another and to accept the right of the British to call for their military forces as exigency should require. They would be asked to submit their differences to the arbitration of the British Government. For practical purposes, the principles, if accepted, would make it imperative that the States surrendered their external sovereignty, without parting with their autonomy. The Governor-General later on wrote to the Secret Committee: "... the establishment of a system of political alliances

should prevent the revival of the system (Pindari) under any form in any part of India. This was accordingly the primary object of my negotiations, and was the main provision of every treaty to be formed. I was willing to receive into this League even those who had notoriously supported the Pindarries and those who were themselves Pindarries in everything but name, provided they gave me security for relinquishing that mode of life and entered into engagements to unite in the general depression of the system."<sup>24</sup> His first target was Daulatrao Sindhia, the most "powerful and decided supporter" of the Pindaris. This measure would compel him to "throw off the mask and range himself on the side of the predatory system." According to Lord Hastings, "... his public abandonment of their cause would not only be a death blow to the hopes of the Pindarries, but would essentially derange the secret combination among the Maratha States, of which he must from his comparative power and resources have been a most powerful support."<sup>25</sup> White, writing in 1822, called it a *Balancing System*, already known in Europe, of which Lord Moira wanted to make an experiment in India.<sup>26</sup>

However, the members of the Council received the proposal with cold indifference. Edmonstone and other members of the Council saw in the scheme a violation of national independence and an abuse of might over weakness. They argued that the principles of International Law did not apply to India. Edmonstone, the senior member of the Council, however, advised that the proposal should be referred to the Court of Directors for consideration. Opposition also came from the Board of Control and the Court of Directors. They apprehended that this would entangle the British Government in a war with the Marathas.

The British authorities in England could not remain blind to this lurking danger in India. The brutal atrocities of the Pindaris and Moira's anxiety to exterminate this menace had already shaken the vacillating Court of Directors to adopt a bold policy to combat the danger. In a despatch of June 4, 1817, the Court directed the Governor-General to take necessary action. "We entirely approve of the resolution which you have reported to us; and that we leave to your judgment and discretion not only the defence of the territories under your charge against the aggression of the Pindarries, but the punishment of the aggression, and the adoption of such measures as may tend to the ultimate suppression of their power . . . you should feel yourselves entirely unshackled in the pursuit of that course of proceeding which you had resolved to pursue."<sup>27</sup>

It was now left to Lord Moira to destroy the Pindaris root and branch. He at once gave finishing touches to the programme, which he had drawn up a year in advance. Besides the military preparations which had been going on Lord Moira decided to avail himself of the services of experienced military and political officers like Sir Thomas Hislop and Sir John Malcolm.

John Malcolm returned to Madras on March 17, 1817. The Governor-General was willing to utilize Malcolm's "talents and energy" in the ensuing Pindari War.<sup>28</sup> He needed the "assistance of a British agent of character, experience and ability to be a channel of correspondence with the Residents at the courts of the allied princes."<sup>29</sup> The Governor-General also wrote in his despatch to the Secret Committee and the Court of Directors:

"... We have appointed Colonel Sir John Malcolm of the Madras establishment to proceed to Sir Thomas Hislop's headquarters as agent of the Governor-General. We have no doubt that the public service will derive essential benefit from the application of Sir John Malcolm's approved experience and ability to the duties assigned to him under this appointment and that his knowledge of the interests and relations of the several powers of the Deccan will render his assistance useful in a high degree to Sir Thomas Hislop."<sup>30</sup>

"The agent should serve as a link between the Governor-General and the Residents at the courts of the allied princes. Moreover, he was expected to perform both political and military duties."<sup>31</sup>

The appointment of Malcolm, a seasoned diplomat, did not raise any controversy. He began his task in right earnest and tried to harness the resources—both British and Indian—for the ensuing Pindari War. In order to ascertain the views of the princes he paid diplomatic visits to several courts. It was his duty to impress upon the princes the gravity of the danger and invite them to cooperate with the British forces. He first visited Mysore. The Raja received him cordially and assured Malcolm of his cooperation. Malcolm wrote to Sir Thomas Hislop: "... the Raja is most fully disposed to exert himself to the utmost of his means, to advance the objects which His Excellency the most noble the Governor-General may have in contemplation."<sup>32</sup> From there he went to Hyderabad where he "was very graciously received by the Nizam." The Nizam promised to offer every help "to promote the public service."<sup>33</sup> From Hyderabad Malcolm reached Poona in August, 1817. Bajirao was then at Mahuli and Malcolm was invited to pay him a visit there. The Peshwa stated his present humiliating position and

harped on his previous friendship with the British. He was eager to renew his friendship with the British Government. Malcolm advised him to collect troops as a mark of loyalty and to send a contingent to aid the English in the coming war with the Pindaris. He requested Bajirao to wipe out all his misconceptions about the British Government. The Peshwa agreed to the proposal. From Poona, Malcolm returned to Hyderabad. From Hyderabad he hastened to Nagpur where he stayed for ten days. With brutal frankness he narrated the plan of the Governor-General to Appasaheb, the Raja of Nagpur. The Raja expressed his "willingness to comply with the direction of the Governor General."<sup>34</sup> In a secret meeting at a private chamber Appasaheb in the presence of Malcolm and Richard Jenkins made requests "regarding aid in supplies, the number of his contingent and the employment of his troops for object of general defence." The Raja also assured the Governor-General through Malcolm his "complete devotion to the English Government."<sup>35</sup> Malcolm scented no danger from Appasaheb. He wrote to the Governor-General: "... he (Appasaheb) at present harbours no unfriendly feeling to the alliance."<sup>36</sup> No doubt Malcolm was flattered by the soothing tongue of the chief of Nagpur. Malcolm's diplomatic missions, except in the Maratha States, were successful. The Raja of Mysore, the Nawab of Bhopal and the Nizam helped the British Government with troops, provision and other supplies.

Malcolm also suggested to the Governor-General that the Pindaris should be isolated from Sindhia and Holkar. According to him the British policy of inaction in the last ten years had shaken "the confidence" of the friendly States. He was of opinion that the interests of Sindhia, Holkar and Amir Khan were so "blended with the Pindaries" that the British Government should move cautiously, "must refrain from offensive operations" and should be prepared to encounter them all.<sup>37</sup> Malcolm suggested the three policies to be adopted against them. The British Government should declare war immediately against the Pindaris. It was his opinion that in case of refusal the protectors and supporters of the Pindaris should be forced to surrender and their territories should be added to the British dominion. Parties not supporting the policy would be treated as hostile power. Secondly, the expulsion of the Pindaris and the ultimate check they should receive by the British troops in forward positions would infuse a sense of fear and apprehension in the ranks of Sindhia, Holkar and Amir Khan. Lastly, it was Malcolm's suggestion that in the event of a war the Government would have

to restore the land and the territories to the allies and some sort of arrangement must be made by which the expenditure incurred in connection with the war must be met by the allies for the sake of peace and tranquillity in the region. He stated that "their conduct has been one of the chief causes, which had compelled the British Government to resort to arms."<sup>38</sup> According to him the Governor-General must not attach importance to their negotiations as "past experience had demonstrated" that no fruit came out of negotiations. On the contrary "procrastination, deception and disappointment" were the outcome of the negotiation.<sup>39</sup> He, therefore, suggested that the British Government should make some demands on them which would be moderate and reasonable.

As Daulatrao Sindhia was the patron of the Pindaris, Malcolm apprehended greater danger from him. So Malcolm wrote to the Governor-General: "His (Sindhia's) faith and his promises cannot be relied for a moment".<sup>40</sup> He cautioned the Governor-General against the adoption of a strict line of action against Sindhia. This would involve risk and "might end in the destruction" of Sindhia and "inevitably lead to increased embarrassments, hazards and expenditure."<sup>41</sup> Malcolm advised that Sindhia should be called upon to offer "his cordial aid" in the suppression of the Pindaris. He was of opinion that Sindhia should be compelled to make a "temporary cession of some forts or tracts of country to which he attached great value," to the British Government."<sup>42</sup> Sindhia should be asked to hand over the fortress of Asirgarh and the town and districts of Burhanpore to the British Government for a period of "three or five years" till the Pindaris were subdued. As the Pindaris had frequently used Asirgarh as their sanctuary, its possession was considered essential to the British Government. "Asserghur (Asirgarh) as a depot is very essential to the communication with that line of corps which we must form upon the Nerbudda (Narmada) and its being in the hands of Sindhia should he be hostile, or pursue a doubtful line, or secretly encourage the Killedar of this fortress to act in pretended opposition to his orders, might prove a very serious obstacle to our operations, and force us at a very inconvenient season to detach a corps to take it."<sup>43</sup> He wrote to the Governor-General: "We can urge that nothing short of his compliance with our demands can restore that confidence which his repeated evasions have forfeited. . . ."<sup>44</sup>

In the war against the Pindaris Sindhia should employ the most "efficient and obedient part" of his irregular horse in cooperation with British troops for the reduction and extinction of the



Pindaris. "He should never engage to shelter any of the principal chiefs of those freebooters, and not again to admit into his service, or to employ troops of that class, that is, bodies of armed men, who receive no pay and avowedly subsist by spoil."<sup>45</sup>

Malcolm also suggested measures to be taken against Holkar. There were some difficulties in Holkar's court which stood in the way of negotiations. Malharrao Holkar being a minor, his step-mother Tulsi Bai was the regent. Tulsi Bai, however, did not exercise full authority. Malcolm, therefore, proposed that the service of Amir Khan should be employed for negotiation. If the effort would fail, the Government should "open a direct communication" with Tulsi Bai. Malcolm's plan was to secure "the temporary possession of Tonk Ramporah as a depot, or one or two fortresses in Candeish (Khandesh) . . . ." "I have no hesitation," Malcolm stated, "in stating my conviction that unless the family of Holkar agree to the demand we make upon it, and afford us a fair security that its resources will not be employed against us, we shall be compelled by military as well as political considerations, to occupy or at least to establish a control over the greatest part of the countries belonging to it in Candeish (Khandesh)."<sup>46</sup>

It was necessary that Sindhia should be detached from the cause of the Pindaris. The suggestions of Malcolm proved to be of immense value to the Governor-General. The Governor-General sent an ultimatum to Sindhia on October 6, 1817. Sindhia had no alternative but to accept the terms. Lord Hastings observed: "If Daulat Rao would hesitate, he would be attacked before he could get succour from any quarter."<sup>47</sup> At last on November 5, 1817, Daulatrao Sindhia signed the Treaty of Gwalior by which he acknowledged British control over his army and promised not to have further relation with the Pindaris. He handed over the fortresses of Asirgarh and Burhanpur to the British Government for two years. On December 31, 1817, the Governor-General recorded in his private journal:

"Daulat Row Scindiah has swallowed his potion, and Heaven knows it was a bitter drench for him. He agrees to cooperate with all his forces against the Pindaries, to prevent the establishment of any similar association in his dominions, to give free passage to the British troops through all his territories in pursuit of the Pindaries, and to put me in possession of two of his fortresses for the security of our communications."<sup>48</sup>

Lord Moira then freed the Rajput States of Udaipur, Jodhpur and Kota from the control of the Marathas which entered into

instructed to march forward in order to strike a blow against the Pindaris. Malcolm crossed the Narmada on November 15, 1817, with Adams and Marshall. The right column was led by Adams and the left by Marshall. The right column moved on Raisen, the centre under Malcolm on Ashta and the left on Unchand. Meanwhile, Major-General Donkin from the north had taken his position on the upper Chambal to close the ring around.

Sir John Malcolm was "specially directed" to pursue Chitu.<sup>51</sup> It was suggested that his force should be formed into two separate columns, so that he might prevent Chitu's escape to the westward. By November 22, he with his three columns had reached the front, the Pindaris retreating, much encumbered, before them. On November 27, Malcolm arrived at Ashta, "which had been Cheetoo's principal cantonment."<sup>52</sup> Here he besieged Talem, which was "held by one of that (Chitu's) chief's officers."<sup>53</sup> Chitu's adopted son Wasil Kunar surrendered to Malcolm. Chitu, on hearing of Malcolm's advance, retired with his whole force, firstly in a northern direction and then westerly towards Holkar's camp. His flight was so rapid as to afford little chance to Malcolm of coming up with him. From Talem Malcolm moved westerly towards Ujjain, with the object of enveloping Holkar's army.

In the meantime Karim Khan and Wasil Muhammad with their forces went on to take refuge in Harauti. But on ascending the Laharigate, ten miles north of Shalsabad, they were driven by a British force. They then tried to cross the Chambal, but failed as it was then held by General Donkin. Then the Pindaris were pursued by Adams. So they hurried back towards the south-west by way of Shirgarh and Chapara, to join Holkar near Mandasore. They were in alarm and left their baggage which fell to the British force. General Donkin in the meantime surprised some Pindaris. Karim Khan's wife Lalki Begum was captured.

At the end of December 1817 Karim Khan, Chitu and Wasil Muhammad tried their best to resist the British attack. But the defeat of Holkar at Mahitpur on December 21, 1817, disappointed them. A large part of their forces were attacked and defeated by General Donkin's column on January 2, 1818. Karim Khan entered Sindhia's territory, Jawad, with the connivance of Yashwantrao Bhao, Sindhia's minister. But he was ousted by Yashwantrao Bhao, who was himself under pressure from Captain Caufield. Caufield had drawn up manifestos in the name of Bhao asking the inhabitants to attack the Pindaris wherever they might appear.

Chagrined at the failure to receive help from Bhao, Karim Khan proceeded towards the thick jungle of Satola and Sadri. But on the

way he was attacked and pursued by Major Clarke. Here Karim Khan had lost nearly one thousand men. Despairing of success, Karim Khan decided to throw himself on the clemency of the British Government, as the only way of saving himself from the complete annihilation. This was the beginning of the submission of the Pindari leaders to the British Government.

Karim Khan despatched the proposal through Sheik Hussain to Malcolm expressing his desire to submit and his intention to serve the British Government provided "he was pardoned for his past conduct."<sup>54</sup> Then Malcolm's assistant, Stewart, addressed a letter to the Pindari leaders advising them to surrender immediately.

After receiving the letter from the assistant of Malcolm, Namdar Khan's father-in-law, Nazim-ud-din, visited the Nawab of Bhopal and informed him of Namdar's intention to surrender to the British Government, on condition that he would not be "deported to Europe."<sup>55</sup> In reply Stewart asked him to submit unconditionally. On February 2, 1818, Namdar Khan with a small party of hundred Pindaris surrendered to Colonel Adams. In Adams's camp he was cordially received. He was asked to "promote the welfare of his adherents" as well as to begin a fresh lease of life.<sup>56</sup>

On February 4, 1818, the first group of Karim Khan's division surrendered to Adams, and after a few days Shamat Khan also. Karim's son with two hundred Pindaris submitted to Zalim Singh of Kota. Karim Khan could not make up his mind. Malcolm's agent, Mirzafar Ali Khan, visited him and asked him to surrender. At last on February 15, 1818, Karim Khan, "poorly dressed, looking fatigued and depressed in spirits", arrived at Malcolm's camp and surrendered. Khandar Baksh, one of the chiefs of the *Holkar Shahi* Pindaris, came to Malcolm's camp on February 28, 1818, and "threw himself upon the clemency of the British Government."<sup>57</sup>

Chitu, when pursued by Malcolm, turned towards Udaipur. The Governor-General instructed Malcolm not to relax his efforts. He said that he had "the most confident hope that every exertion will be made for their early apprehension."<sup>58</sup> The Governor-General asked Malcolm to take vigorous and active measures for the pursuit of Chitu and his followers. A part of Chitu's force was surprised and his followers fled in all directions. Chitu with a few followers marched towards Bhopal.

Malcolm's officers followed Chitu. But he was advised by Captain Roberts, who was near Bhopal, to relax his operations against Chitu and Rajun. He requested Malcolm to offer lenient terms so that they would be induced to surrender. In the meantime

Malcolm also received a letter from Syed Hussain, who informed him that Chitu and Rajun were willing to submit. Chitu expressed his desire to surrender provided he was allowed to stay in Malwa with "all the insignia of a ruler".<sup>59</sup>

Malcolm then addressed a letter to both of them, stating the terms which would be granted to them if they would surrender without any delay. He stated that adequate provision would be made for their sustenance but they would not be allowed to stay in Malwa. For their settlement they would be granted lands in "some of the towns, districts or provinces of Hindusthan."<sup>60</sup>

This letter of Malcolm brought about a quarrel between Chitu and Rajun. Chitu could never reconcile himself to the idea of banishment from Malwa. So he did not submit while Rajun did. Rajun implored on the "generosity of Malcolm for allowing him to stay on in Malwa"<sup>61</sup> He was granted a pension of Rs. 200/- per month.

Chitu could not rely on the assurance of Malcolm. "The idea of banishment from Malwa was the chief cause of his refusing to surrender."<sup>62</sup> Chitu returned to the Deccan, met Appasaheb, the Raja of Nagpur, who assured him help. This was probably the reason for Chitu's rejection of Malcolm's proposal. On his march he was attacked by the *Bhils* and *Grasias*. He was then proceeding towards the jungles near Asirgarh, where he was attacked and devoured by a tiger. In February 1819 a part of his body, his head together with his weapons, were found near a tiger's den. These were brought to Malcolm, who showed them to Muhammad Puna, the son of Chitu. Puna identified them as those of his father. Puna had already surrendered to Malcolm. Malcolm, "out of grace and clemency", set him free.<sup>63</sup> Puna was allowed to proceed with his family to Hoshangabad. Malcolm granted a sum of Rs. 100/- to Puna and his family for maintenance.

The Pindari war came to an end. The Pindaris were annihilated thoroughly. Their name was little heard of in later times. Malcolm remarked:

"... there remains not a spot in India that a Pindary can call his home ... their principal leaders have either died, submitted or been made captives, whilst their followers with the exception of a few, whom the liberality and consideration of the British Government have aided to become industrious, are lost in that population from the dregs of which they originally issued."<sup>64</sup>

## Notes and References

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## CHAPTER VI

# Bajirao's Surrender

LORD MOIRA'S preparations against the Pindaris made the Maratha chiefs apprehensive. They viewed with concern the advance of the British troops and gravely suspected that these military preparations on the part of the British Government were aimed not only against the Pindaris but also against them. The Maratha leaders could not shake off from their mind the ulterior object of the British Government and regarded the Pindari war as a prelude to another Maratha war. So the eyes of the Maratha chiefs fell upon the Peshwa, the focal point of the Maratha Confederacy, who might lead them at this crisis.

To Bajirao an opportunity had come for the assertion of his authority as the head of the Maratha States. On December 31, 1802, he had lost that pivotal position which he enjoyed on the eve of the conclusion of the Treaty of Bassein. With his signature of the treaty, the "ancient Confederacy of the Maratha States" ceased to exist.<sup>1</sup> His "feudal superiority" over the Maratha States had gone. The other Maratha States had been regarded as separate and independent States when the British Government concluded treaties with them. The Peshwa was now repentant of his action. Having nurtured in his heart feelings of hostility against the British, the Peshwa made a desperate bid to extricate himself from their thralldom.

Bajirao began to make secret preparations for war from the middle of 1816. He carried on negotiations with the Maratha chiefs like Sindhia, Holkar and Bhonsle. From these chiefs he was assured of help and cooperation. Sindhia in a secret memorandum requested the Peshwa that "Bajee Rao should emancipate himself from the English, collect his jagirdars and adherents and after preparing a large army, commence a war." "I shall be ready", Sindhia added, "to follow your example."<sup>2</sup> Sindhia despatched a secret letter to the court of Kathmandu, asking them to stand united against the British. The Peshwa on his part appointed an agent at the court of Ranjit Singh at Lahore. Through Ranjit Singh he tried to secure the help of the Shah of Kabul. In contravention of the Treaty of Bassein he posted agents at the courts of Gwalior, Indore and Nagpur. Bajirao

asked the Nagpur Raja, Appasaheb, to stand by him and fight unitedly against the British forces. He wrote: "We are all pugreebunds, that is, we all wear turbans. If I (the Peshwa) require it, you must send your troops to assist me or if you require it, I will assist you."<sup>3</sup> The Raja in reply to the letter assured the Peshwa: "I have received your letter and understood its contents. You are my elder, have seen and done much and still will. I am your junior. Be perfectly at ease about me. I am yours. The rest you will learn from the verbal communications of Sukharam Punt."<sup>4</sup>

A few words may be said in this connection on the circumstances which led to the downfall of the Peshwa. A dispute had been going on between the Peshwa and the Gaikwad on the question of settlement of accounts. To settle the question the latter sent his minister, Gangadhar Shastri, to Poona. The personal safety of Shastri was guaranteed by the British Government. On July 20, 1815, Shastri, in spite of his unwillingness, was conducted on the temple of Vithoba at Pandharpur where he was murdered at the instigation of Trimbakji Denglia, the Peshwa's minister. The Bombay Government held Trimbakji responsible for the murder and demanded his person. Bajirao at first hesitated to hand over his minister to the Bombay Government. But Elphinstone, the Resident at Poona, insisted on the surrender of Trimbakji. The Governor-General also asked the Peshwa to hand over his minister to the Resident. The Peshwa at last yielded and surrendered his minister to Elphinstone, who placed Trimbakji under arrest in the fort of Thana. On September 12, 1816, Trimbakji escaped from the fort and it was suspected that Bajirao had a hand in it. Elphinstone asked the Peshwa to "seize Trimbakji and his adherents, and set a prize on his head."<sup>5</sup> The Peshwa demurred.

With a view to "recovering his power" Trimbakji after his escape from prison began to make brisk preparations of war in the Southern Maratha country. By March 1817 he had collected 3,000 horse and 300 infantry. The Southern Maratha country was in a state of "extreme unrest and disturbance." The British Resident asked Bajirao to send forces to quell the disturbance. The Peshwa, accordingly, despatched a force under his general Bapu Gokhale, who quietly settled at Natepota and reported that there was no disturbance.<sup>6</sup> Elphinstone did not believe it. On the other hand, he maintained that Bajirao was "a privy to Trimbakji's conspiracy". And this contention was based on the information which he collected from various sources. To help Trimbakji in his machinations of intrigues the Peshwa had given five lakhs of rupees to Bapu Gokhale. When Bajirao offered to go himself in pursuit of the rebel, Elphin-



stone refused to comply with his request. As a precautionary measure the British Resident ordered Colonel Smith to move with two regiments of light cavalry near Parenda, and the light battalion near Ahmadnagar. He also requested the British Resident at Hyderabad to send Major Macdowell with a detachment to the neighbourhood of Tulajpur.

Bajirao's conduct during this period evoked strong suspicion. He began to recruit troops and asked his chiefs to fill up their quota. He gave Malharrao Holkar a sum of one lakh and fifty thousand rupees to clear off the outstanding dues of Holkar's soldiers. The hill forts were provisioned and he shifted treasure, jewels and even wardrobe from Poona. The Peshwa was said to have compelled the shopkeepers of Poona "to purchase a quantity of clothes at a certain valuation and to have burned (burnt) down others for the sake of the gold and silver they contained." These reports alarmed Elphinstone, who decided to act immediately. On April 21, 1817, Elphinstone in a peremptory note warned the Peshwa that hostilities would ensue if he did not apprehend and surrender Trimbakji Denglia. This ultimatum had a curious effect. Bajirao invited Elphinstone to a conference, which took place on May 6, 1817. The British Resident insisted "on the immediate surrender of Trimbakji Denglia within the period of one month." The Peshwa gave an evasive reply. Elphinstone also demanded that the Peshwa must hand over the hill forts of Sinhagarh, Purandar and Raigarh. The Governor-General also asked the Peshwa to make arrangements for the arrest of Trimbakji. He also stated that a new treaty should be concluded with the Peshwa. Pressure was exerted upon Bajirao to conclude a fresh treaty. So on June 13, 1817, Bajirao signed the Treaty of Poona with the British Government. The treaty forced the Peshwa "to recognize the dissolution in form and substance of the Maratha Confederacy."

After the conclusion of the treaty the Peshwa repaired to Pandharpur on his usual annual pilgrimage. He was allowed to go as Elphinstone believed that this would "contribute to produce the appearances and even in some measure the reality of a reconciliation."<sup>7</sup>

On August 5, 1817, Malcolm, the Governor-General's Political Agent, paid a diplomatic visit to Poona. The Peshwa was then at Mahuli. He requested Malcolm to come there. Malcolm responded to the call and arrived there in the evening of August 8, 1817. Next morning he saw a "careworn" Peshwa with whom he had a meeting for three and a half hours.<sup>8</sup> There as "a well-wisher and an old

friend" of the Peshwa Malcolm tried to "impress on him every consideration that could reconcile His Highness to the past or turn his mind to hopes for future." Bajirao "complained of his crippled state under the Treaty of Poona and of the loss of the friendship of the English," and declared his longing to have the friendship renewed.<sup>9</sup> He pleaded his ignorance of the murder of Gangadhar Shastri. He added that he was compelled to sign a humiliating treaty. Malcolm advised Bajirao to "afford the most zealous cooperation in the approaching war (against the Pindaris) as the best means of recovering the confidence of the British Government and of obtaining a prospect of improvement to his confidence."<sup>10</sup>

The Governor-General approved of his conduct at this meeting as this would "produce an useful impression on His Highness's (Peshwa's) mind."<sup>11</sup> Malcolm wrote about this to his wife: "What passed is secret and political, but the result was satisfactory."<sup>12</sup> The Peshwa agreed to the suggestion and spoke with "such cordiality, candour and sense that Sir John Malcolm went back to Elphinstone."<sup>13</sup> Malcolm told Elphinstone that his object was to make Bajirao a firm ally of the English Government. He requested Elphinstone to allow Bajirao to raise troops in the war against the Pindaris. But Elphinstone refused to change his opinion about the fickleness of Bajirao. In his opinion Bajirao was far from trustworthy and to permit him to raise troops would be to make him an enemy of the English rather than an ally. Though unwilling, Elphinstone did not oppose Malcolm's suggestions. "If anybody was completely deceived by the flattering tongue of Baji Rao, it was Malcolm."<sup>14</sup>

Malcolm granted Bajirao a passport to recruit a large army to help the British against the Pindaris. In the name of war against the Pindaris, Bajirao set on foot intrigues against the British Government. His old forts were repaired. He recruited a large army. In the fortress of Asirgarh there was a garrison of four thousand men. The Holkar Government had taken charge of the families of all the Pindaris and desired them to aid the Peshwa. It is said that the Peshwa had sent two lakhs of rupees to Amir Khan and three lakhs of rupees to Holkar to recruit armies. Lord Moira in his despatch to the Secret Committee wrote: "... Baji Rao was so anxious for the speedy formation of an army that there was not a single horseman in his country out of employ. His pay was represented as being immensely liberal, and no difficulty was made as to the quality of either the men or the horses that were enrolled."<sup>15</sup> Besides these, the Peshwa tried to seduce the Company's sepoys from their allegiance; but the attempt failed. The Peshwa was preparing himself

to attack the Residency. Promptly Elphinstone increased the Residency guard to 700 sepoys. The Resident's quarters still were by no means strong against a full attack from the Peshwa. Elphinstone withdrew Colonel Burr's force to the village of Kirkee, where he would get aid from Captain Ford's subsidiary force, who had stationed his forces at Dapuri. Meanwhile on October 30, 1817, the Resident's position was improved by the arrival of the European Regiment from Bombay. Colonel Burr prepared his position at Kirkee in consultation with the Resident to meet any sudden attack by the Marathas. There were three thousand British forces with five guns.

Still Elphinstone found his situation unsafe and on November 3, 1817, ordered the light battalion and one thousand auxiliary horse at Sirur to fall back on Poona.<sup>16</sup> When he heard of this Bajirao sent an ultimatum through Vithoji Naik to Elphinstone demanding "the departure of European Regiments, the reduction of brigade to its normal strength, and the removal of the cantonment to a place recommended by the Peshwa," failing which there would be an end of all friendly relations.<sup>17</sup> The Resident refused to comply with the demand of the Peshwa and asserted that he would not hesitate to attack if the Peshwa's troops would approach towards the British lines. Within an hour after Vithoji's return, the Maratha horsemen were seen moving towards the Residency. Elphinstone had hardly the time to escape. He with his staff retreated towards the British line. The Residency was set on fire and completely burnt. After setting fire to the Residency buildings the Peshwa's general, Bapu Gokhale, launched his attack on the British camp of Kirkee from the plain of Ganesh Khind.

The battle began at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon of November 5, 1817. Elphinstone decided to take the offensive and asked Colonel Burr to assail the Marathas. The Maratha cavalry tried to get into the rear of the British army. But they were driven back by constant artillery fire to Ganesh Khind. The Peshwa sustained a heavy loss. His minister Moro Dikshit was killed.

The battle of Kirkee did not give the Peshwa the expected result. He felt nervous, but his drooping spirit was buoyed up by Bapu Gokhale, who made preparations for another battle. General Smith arrived at Kirkee from Sirur on November 13, and decided in collaboration with the Resident to take the offensive. Under the cover of their heavy artillery fire, Smith on November 16 crossed the Mula-Mutha and captured Ghorpadi. He met there a strong resistance from the Peshwa's Arab infantry and cavalry. But the

Maratha troops were repulsed. This battle, known as the battle of Yerveda, was significant, as the Peshwa lost mastery over Poona which fell into the British grip. On November 17, the British flag was unfurled on the Peshwa's palace<sup>18</sup>

Bajirao was hotly pursued by General Smith. The Peshwa had fled southward. At Mahuli he was joined by Appa Desai of Nipani with a thousand Arab mercenaries. From Mahuli, Bajirao despatched Naro Vishnu Apte for bringing the Raja of Satara and his family to his own camp, lest they should desert to English. He himself marched further south to the vicinity of Miraj. Here he heard that some British troops were coming from the south to attack him. The Peshwa retreated to Pusesavli where he stayed on November 27 and 28,<sup>19</sup> and then proceeded to Pandharpur. He then turned north west and was joined at Talegaon by the Raja of Satara. Bajirao suddenly changed his route and advanced towards Poona.

The news of the Peshwa's advance towards his capital caused a stir in the British camp. Colonel Burr made arrangements for the protection of the city. Captain Staunton was asked by Elphinstone to come to Poona. He left Sirur on the evening of December 31, 1817, and halted in the morning of January 1, 1818, on the high ground of Koregaon on the Bhima. The Peshwa happened to be in the vicinity of Poona at that moment and ordered Bapu Gokhale to attack the British forces.<sup>20</sup> The fighting continued throughout the day. Although fatigued by their long march, Staunton and his sepoys fought with admirable gallantry. In the evening their position became desperate. Bajirao suddenly resumed his flight when he heard that General Smith was approaching. The Peshwa once more turned towards the south, where Munro and Pritzler hotly pursued him. Bajirao was then wandering in the neighbourhood of Sholapur. General Smith resumed his pursuit. After crossing the Bhima he learnt that the Peshwa had encamped near Ashta. So he marched in that direction. On February 19, 1818, a severe encounter took place. In the beginning the Maratha cavalry charged fiercely. General Smith was wounded. Gokhale's daring charge caused confusion in the British camp but in the heat of battle he was killed. The Peshwa fled away hurriedly with his wife and three ladies riding with him in male attire. The Raja of Satara, his two brothers and their mother fell into the British hands. The battle of Ashta sealed the fate of the Peshwa for ever. His officers began to desert him. His army was demoralized and was on the point of breaking up. The Peshwa then tried to proceed towards Berar. Near Shivni on April 17, his force was surprised by Colonel Adams. With scanty followers he proceeded towards Khandesh for the safety of his life.

These successive reverses made the Peshwa desperate. He wanted to move northward but the road was well guarded by the British troops. So he changed his direction to the east and reached Dhulkot, near Sindhia's fort at Asirgarh. Yashwantrao, the killedar of the fort, came out to see him. Some officers of Sindhia sent the Peshwa "presents", Yashwantrao was willing to receive Bajirao and his family in the fort.<sup>21</sup> It was suspected that he (the Peshwa) intended to leave his family in the fort. The Peshwa was surrounded from all sides. General Malcolm blocked his way to the north, General Doveton proceeded from the south, while Sir David Ochterlony was ordered by the Governor-General not to allow Bajirao to proceed to Gwalior. "He was on the brink of destruction."<sup>22</sup>

In his sore predicament Bajirao had no way left but to crave the indulgence of the British. He sent two agents, Anandrao Yashwant and Anandrao Biswanath, to Malcolm's camp on the night of May 17. They carried a letter from their master in which Bajirao referred to the friendship that existed between his house and that of the East India Company, and his object was to "continue and increase" that "friendship".<sup>23</sup> "This circumstance appeared to Sir John Malcolm to present a favourable opportunity of inducing Bajee Rao to surrender and of thus closing the war."<sup>24</sup> Malcolm "applied himself at once with accustomed zeal and energy to accomplish that object."<sup>25</sup>

The *vakils* pleaded the case of their master. They added that the Peshwa at present had no feeling of hostility against the British Government. They told Malcolm that Bajirao got his *masnad* in 1803 owing to the friendly attitude of the British Government. Anandrao Yashwant pointed out that Bajirao then was in a distressed state. His position was further aggravated when his brother Chimnaji Appa and Appa Desai of Nipani defected to the British side. Malcolm told the *vakils* that their master could never expect to be restored "even to nominal sovereignty".<sup>26</sup> The only good counsel he could suggest to their master was that Bajirao should submit immediately. According to Malcolm this was the only way of saving "himself, his family and his adherents from total destruction."<sup>27</sup> The Peshwa through the *vakils* requested Malcolm to go to his camp, where he (Malcolm) would be "acquainted with the details of the whole business." To Malcolm this proposal seemed objectionable on two grounds, (i) "it would have shown a solicitude for his submission that might have operated against the object which it was meant to promote." (ii) It would prevent Malcolm from accomplishing "the combined purposes his (Peshwa's) reduction and other objects of

public service." He, therefore, thought it "impolitic" to go personally to Bajirao's camp,<sup>28</sup> but he sent his assistants, Lieutenant Low and Lieutenant Macdonald, to the Maratha camp "to ascertain the actual condition of the Paishwah, and the sincerity of his professions, and to endeavour to hasten his advance to meet Brigadier-General Malcolm."<sup>29</sup> In reply to the letter of Bajirao, Malcolm laid down the following conditions to which the Maratha chief must conform: "Baji Rao would not be restored to sovereignty, he would never be allowed to stay in the Deccan; he would give up Trimbakji Denglia and the murderers of Captain Vaughan and his brothers." The Peshwa must move to Malcolm's camp immediately, who would endeavour to effect a settlement between him and the British Government on the following conditions: (1) Bajirao's safety and personal liberty would be guaranteed. He would be treated with respect; (2) He would be "allowed as much latitude in the choice of place of future residence as . . . compatible with the general peace of India;<sup>30</sup> and (3) He must sever his connections with Ganpat Rao, Ramdin and the Pindaris.

Lieutenant Low reached Bajirao's camp on May 29. He found the Peshwa "in a state of great alarm".<sup>31</sup> Bajirao demanded that during his proposed meeting with Malcolm, the British troops must be withdrawn to a distance, and there must be a cessation of hostilities for eight days, which Lieutenant Low refused. At last the Maratha chief agreed to meet Malcolm at Khairi.

"This meeting was first fixed for May 31, but afterwards put off by mutual consent."<sup>32</sup> On June 2, Malcolm went with a small escort to the village of Khairi to meet Bajirao, who had with him 200 horse, 800 infantry and two guns. Malcolm's colleagues warned him of treachery by the Marathas. But the English General suspected no such danger. Malcolm wanted to remove the suspicion of the Peshwa so that the latter might be induced to submit. In his letter to John Adam, he wrote that his object was to achieve "the cheerful submission of Baji Rao."<sup>33</sup>

Malcolm saw the Peshwa in a "low and dejected" condition. After the usual greetings Malcolm asked him whether he wished to have a private talk with him (Malcolm). Bajirao's reply was affirmative. They moved to a small tent where Malcolm had a long conference with Bajirao. The interview evoked utmost commiseration as the unfortunate Peshwa lamented his present piteous condition. "He had been involved," he said, "in a war he never intended, treated as an enemy by the State which had supported his family for two generations."<sup>34</sup> He, therefore, demanded "commiseration".

He told Malcolm that his followers and even his relatives with whom he had blood tie, had deserted him at this critical hour. So at the present moment he needed a friend like Malcolm who could save him from this abject condition. The Peshwa appealed to Malcolm to "afford him every relief."<sup>35</sup> Malcolm explained to the Peshwa that he would not like to give him any false hope. He advised Bajirao to face the situation courageously and in a manly manner. According to Malcolm, "this was a crisis in his life." He in clear terms laid down the conditions: that Bajirao would never be allowed to retain the sovereign power and title; secondly, he would be banished from the land of his forefathers. "The decision", Malcolm explained, "was taken not merely as a punishment of him but as an example to others."<sup>36</sup> Moreover such measures were essential to the establishment of general peace. He thus offered Bajirao a "bitter pill" to swallow which the latter could hardly take. To the Peshwa this proposal seemed unacceptable. So he "made every effort to obtain some change." Malcolm informed him that the decision of the British Government on these two points was final. The Peshwa and members of his family would receive liberal pension for their maintenance. Even some of his adherents, who "had been involved in his ruin," had been promised provisions.

Bajirao was warned of the danger which would result from delay. "Every moment of delay", Malcolm pointed out, "was one of danger and that the sooner his mind was made up the better, to the course he was to pursue. He should either . . . throw himself at once on the clemency and generosity of the English Government or determine upon further resistance."<sup>37</sup> The Peshwa, however, was in an indecisive mood.

Malcolm advised the Peshwa to seize and hand over Trimbakji as "a proof of sincerity". Bajirao told him that he had regarded Trimbakji as his mortal enemy, and he held him responsible for his downfall. Bajirao asked for another meeting next day which Malcolm refused. Bajirao was told that "no procrastination could be admitted to the propositions."<sup>38</sup> Malcolm sent him the following propositions for his signature.

1. Bajirao must resign. He as well as his successors must give up all claim and title over the Government of Poona.
2. Bajirao should immediately come with his family and a small number of his adherents and attendants to the camp of Brigadier-General Malcolm, who would send him to Benares or any other sacred place in the north, that the Governor-General would decide at his request.

3. For the establishment of peace in the Deccan, Bajirao must proceed to Hindustan without a day's delay as the rainy season was fast approaching. Malcolm, however, undertook the responsibility of sending any part of his family that were left behind.

4. Bajirao should receive a liberal pension from the British Government for the support of himself and his family. The amount of this pension would be fixed by the Governor-General, but Malcolm promised that it would not be less than eight lakhs of rupees per annum.

5. Bajirao's "requests in favour of principal Jegeerdars (jagirdars) and old adherents who had been ruined by their attachment to him" would get the liberal attention of the Government. His representations in favour of "Brahmins and religious establishments" would be treated with sympathy.

6. "Bajirao must come to Malcolm's camp within twenty-four hours; otherwise hostilities would break out and no further negotiations would be entered into with him."<sup>39</sup>

In dictating these terms to the Peshwa, Malcolm was anxious to achieve his "cheerful submission". But Bajirao could not make up his mind; so he sent Anandrao Yashwant to Malcolm with a request "for another day's delay, as the 3rd of June was . . . an unlucky day and he had religious ceremonies to perform."<sup>40</sup> This news incensed Malcolm, who at once asked him to go and carry the message to his master, "It would prove a most unlucky day for his master if he did not come within two hours". After the message Bajirao with his party at about 11 o'clock in the morning reached Malcolm's camp.

Malcolm with Bajirao's party started for Northern India. His followers began to desert him. But a new trouble began. At the time of his arrival at Malcolm's camp, Bajirao had with him 8,000 men, of whom about 1,200 were Arabs. Soon after five or six hundred Arabs joined him. These soldiers surrounded the ex-Peshwa's camp and "clamoured" for their arrears of pay. Malcolm apprehended that something "unpleasant would occur".<sup>41</sup> So at the initial stage he wanted to lend his service to the ex-Peshwa. The latter told Malcolm that "he could manage the affair himself and did not court any interference".<sup>42</sup> The English officer kept his men ready. On June 9, at about 12 o'clock a messenger from Bajirao's camp came with a news that the mutineers had surrounded his tent. Malcolm at once proceeded to the Maratha chief's camp and warned the chiefs of the Arab, Sindhi and Rohilla infantry to refrain from committing any violence. He threatened them with "extirpation". He assured



them that the Peshwa had made arrangements for the payment of their dues. This pacified the Arab mutineers who left the Maratha tent. "Malcolm displayed his judgment, spirit and humanity" in the suppression of the Arab revolt.<sup>43</sup> Bajirao expressed his gratitude to Malcolm for the friendly service. In his despatch to the Governor-General Malcolm wrote: "His joy was as excessive as his alarm had been. He called me the saviour of his honour and his life."<sup>44</sup> On June 12, Bajirao crossed the Narmada. Thus banished from the land of his forefathers he proceeded to the north to his new place of residence. Bajirao was the first Indian ruler to live as a pension-holder at a distance from his homeland. He lost the title *Shrimant* and began to be called *Maharaj*. The surrender of the last Peshwa left a mark on the minds of his countrymen. Colonel Burton narrates: "In the Deccan Bajirao is still remembered. The villagers pointed out the place he passed during his flight; and some say that, in the silent watches of the night, they hear the beat of the 10,000 hoops of his myriad horse upon the plain."<sup>45</sup>

Bajirao's submission cast a gloom among the Marathas. The news was not believed at first but when its truth had been proved, they styled it as the "death of the Maratha Empire".<sup>46</sup> Daulatrao Sindhia was blamed for bringing about the Peshwa's misfortune. With the surrender of the Maratha chief there remained no virile Indian power which could challenge the further expansion of the British power in India. The British paramountcy was firmly established in India.

The role of the Patwardhan chiefs and Southern jagirdars in the war deserves a special study. The chief of Vinchukar helped the Peshwa at Ganesh-Khind with a large body of horse. But his loyalty to the Peshwa was not above board. The latter suspected his defection to the British side.

After the British occupation of Poona, Elphinstone did not fail to exploit the situation to his advantage. He addressed a letter to Madhurarao Rastia, the chief of Vinchukar, Appa Desai of Nipani, Chintamanrao Patwardhan and other chiefs asking them to recall the troops which they had despatched for the Peshwa's service. He assured them of British Government's acquiescence on their retention of the possessions which they had enjoyed under the Peshwas. The jagirdars in general refused to quit "his person" (Peshwa's). But it is an irony of fate that all the jagirdars were not sincere to the cause of the Peshwa. Elphinstone in his despatch to the Governor-General on November 21, 1817, wrote that he had received a letter from Madhurarao Dadaji, the son of Parshuram Bhao, who, he wrote, was

compelled to send his nephew Rao Saheb to join the Peshwa. But his heart was with the British Government.<sup>47</sup> The Raja of Kolhapur also professed his allegiance to the British Government and offered the forts of his dominions for the "Company's service". During the war period the Southern Maratha chiefs did not molest the British *Dawak* (postal) runners for the news they supplied. Rather the rulers cooperated with them in sending the friendly messages.

While negotiations with Bajirao had been going on, Bhikaji Nana, a *vakil* from the chief of Vinchukar, arrived at Malcolm's camp at Metowal on May 31, 1818, expressing his master's desire of "submission to the British Government".<sup>48</sup> He told Malcolm that his master's family had served the Peshwas for "five generations". In the last war the chief of Vinchukar had made a "sacrifice of his lands, forts and property" for the cause of Bajirao. At present when Bajirao was thinking of surrender, the chief of Vinchukar had decided to place himself "on the generosity of the British Government". To this proposal Malcolm gave his consent and asked him to help the British Government in the task of reorganization of the ex-Peshwa's territories.

Proposals of submission also came from Trimbakji Denglia. On June 1, 1818, he sent a *vakil* to Malcolm's camp, expressing his desire to submit. He narrated that he was not responsible for the murder of Gangadhar Shastri, that he was willing to turn a *Gossain* and would give Daulatrao Sindhia and Yashwantrao Bhao, the killedar of Asirgarh, "as security for his future good conduct", provided "he was allowed to disband his troops and depart in peace."<sup>49</sup>

To these proposals Malcolm's answer was that he would never enter into terms with Trimbakji, "who was a criminal". The only advice he would give was that he should come alone into Malcolm's camp and surrender unconditionally. "He would be taken into custody . . . but his life would be spared . . . and when tranquillity was restored, his crimes might be forgotten and the good resulting from his unconditional surrender remembered."<sup>50</sup> This proposal of "unconditional surrender" did not seem favourable to Trimbakji, who fled towards Khandesh. But on June 29, 1818, he was captured near Khandesh by Captain Briggs.

The annual grant of eight lakhs of rupees to Bajirao had been the subject of controversy. According to the Governor-General the grant was as "much more favourable than he had contemplated."<sup>51</sup> The entire picture will be clear if we analyse the circumstances which led Malcolm to sanction the sum of eight lakhs. While negotiations with Bajirao had been going on, Malcolm had no "specific instruction" from the Governor-General.<sup>52</sup> But Malcolm

faced the task in the "spirit" of the Governor-General's letter to Elphinstone of December 15, 1817. Malcolm in his letter to Elphinstone wanted to know whether he had any instruction from the Governor-General subsequent to December 15 regarding the terms to be dictated to Bajirao. Elphinstone wrote to him that he had "no orders on the subject". When the news of negotiation with Bajirao reached the Governor-General, the latter instructed Malcolm that Bajirao's future residence should be left to his discretion. With regard to the allowance the Governor-General's opinion was that the allowance should be "restricted to such a sum as shall suffice for his maintenance with his family and domestics in comfort and respectability . . . ." <sup>53</sup> But the instructions of the Governor-General, which were despatched from Gorakhpur on May 30, reached Malcolm when the negotiation with Bajirao was completed. Malcolm's reasons for granting the sum of eight lakhs to Bajirao were the following:

(1) While negotiations with the British were going on, Bajirao was encamped near Asirgarh. He was in a state of "comparative comfort". <sup>54</sup> The killedar of Asirgarh was willing to afford him and his soldiers asylum. Yashwantrao posed himself as the "champion of the distressed sovereign of the Maratha Empire." <sup>55</sup> Malcolm in his despatch to the Governor-General narrated that Trimbakji had "constant communication" with Bajirao. The ex-Peshwa's troops had "free ingress and egress" within the defence of Asirgarh. The British General also came to learn that on June 1, 1818, Bajirao had sent all "valuable of his baggage" into Asirgarh with a strong detachment of infantry. Moreover "his remaining army had been refreshed by the most abundant supplies." <sup>56</sup> Sindhia was in secret league with him. While advancing towards Burhanpur Bajirao received a letter from Daulatrao who requested him to go to Gwalior.

(2) The enemies had been "subdued but not destroyed". <sup>57</sup> A large number of unemployed soldiers "remained in a scattered state". About 12,000 horsemen wanted to lend their services to Malcolm but he refused to take them in. The "rumoured approach" of the Peshwa towards Malwa would have created a sense of hope and inspiration to them. They would at once reunite under any chief that promised them "pay or plunder". <sup>58</sup>

(3) Elphinstone in his letter to Malcolm stated that the whole of Poona and its adjoining territory was in a disturbed state as long as the Peshwa was in arms. The defeat of the British at Malligaum in Khandesh had been exaggerated. The delay in the matter of negotiation would have put the British troops in troubles.

(4) General Doveton's opinion was no less important. Doveton was in command of the siege of Asirgarh. He also supported the

contention of Malcolm. He wrote: "Having been an actor in that part of the drama (the surrender of Bajirao), and on the spot, few can be better qualified, perhaps, to give an opinion than myself. . . . There cannot be a doubt that it was your negotiation with Bajee Rao and the assurances of protection which it contained, that kept him where he was during my advance; that he had the perfect power of going to Asheer at any hour of the day or night, without it being possible for any efforts of ours to have prevented it at that time."<sup>59</sup>

(5) Bajirao, at the time of surrender to Malcolm, was at the head of 8,000 men. Malcolm considered that he had "the power of protracting the war till the next fair season."<sup>60</sup> During the rainy season the operation against him could not be undertaken. Every prince and chief, who had been deprived of their power and possession, "would have cherished hopes of change" and rallied round Bajirao. In order to hasten the submission Malcolm granted Bajirao a liberal pension.

The grant of eight lakhs as pension to the Peshwa was according to Malcolm the best that could be offered to him. His brother Amritrao had been granted a pension of eight lakhs of rupees when Bajirao was restored to power in 1803. The ex-Peshwa could claim more than double or treble of that sum. The amount of eight lakhs should not be considered a huge sum because he had a large establishment to maintain. Moreover, the fixation of any amount less than eight lakhs would have been considered as a "degradation". The measure resulted not from a personal feeling, Malcolm explained, but from principles consistent with reputation and interests of the British Government.<sup>61</sup> Malcolm held the view that before Bajirao the Indian princes, who had been defeated in wars, had not only been allowed to remain in power, but also been granted large pensions. At present in a new abode Bajirao would have to bear certain additional expenses. Moreover, the sum of eight lakhs had been granted only for the lifetime of Bajirao. No separate provision had been made for his family and future dependants.<sup>62</sup>

The Governor-General did not agree with Malcolm. He was of opinion that Bajirao had no other alternative but to surrender; and the British Government could have purchased his submission with only two lakhs of rupees annually. The Governor-General apprehended that the huge amount might encourage Bajirao to foment troubles. On this point the Governor-General's opinion was not correct. His exaggerated fear about Bajirao had not come to pass even after a couple of years. He was, therefore, happy to

observe: "The importance of Bajee Rao's early surrender was an advantage which I felt and acknowledged and the zeal and ability manifested by Sir John Malcolm have invariably received my warmest testimony. Now after the lapse of four years from the period of Bajee Rao's surrender, I am happy to state that none of the ill consequences I apprehended, from the very favourable terms offered by Sir John Malcolm, have taken place . . ." <sup>63</sup> Of course, the Governor-General did not question the "zeal and public spirit" which John Malcolm had displayed in bringing the war to an earlier conclusion. <sup>64</sup> He congratulated him for inducing Bajirao to surrender.

The Court of Directors after going through the papers was happy to learn that the submission of Bajirao was achieved and the tranquillity in India was brought about. They shared the view with Malcolm that Bajirao "had some chance of escape, and that, by throwing into Assergurh, he might, at all events for a considerable period of time, have deprived us of the important advantages which resulted from his early surrender." <sup>65</sup>

The grant of eight lakhs of rupees to Bajirao might have caused misgivings in the initial stage to the Governor-General and others, but Malcolm's friends and colleagues warmly supported him for his generous gesture to a fallen foe. Elphinstone in a letter on June 18, 1818, wrote: "I congratulate you on your success with Bajirao. I must congratulate myself on the same event, which will secure me the peace of this country, and give me more time to think of the important task of its civil settlement . . . eight lakhs, I think, a very reasonable provision." <sup>66</sup> Sir Thomas Munro congratulated Malcolm on his "having caught Sreemunt by the leg." Had Bajirao fallen into his hands, he "would have offered him ten in place of eight lakhs". Jenkins, the Resident at Nagpur, thought that "the sacrifice made to obtain the object was trifling." Sir David Ochterlony in a letter dated June 4, 1818, to Colonel Agnew remarked: "I rejoice that Malcolm has brought matters by the extinguishment of the fire-brand, which low as it was reduced, still contained a spark that might have produced an amazing conflagration. Our success, however, has been miraculous."

The question to be considered is whether Malcolm's offer of rupees eight lakhs as pension to Bajirao was judicious or not. What would have happened, had he not offered that stipulated sum to the ex-Peshwa? Probably, Bajirao would have become desperate and entered the fort of Asirgarh at the invitation of Yashwantrao Bhao, the killedar of the fort. In that case the war would have been prolonged and would have exhausted the depleted resources of the

Company. For, as a matter of fact, Bajirao submitted to Malcolm in the month of June 1818 and the fall of the fort of Asirgarh took place in April 1819. In the course of these eleven months much time and money of the British Government would have been lost and fresh troubles might have followed. Moreover, the administrative reforms of Malcolm and Elphinstone in Malwa and in the newly conquered territories from the ex-Peshwa would have been hampered, had not Malcolm taken this wise step. Besides, the people would have lost confidence in justice and generosity of the East India Company. Therefore, Malcolm displayed astute political wisdom in granting the sum of eight lakhs to Bajirao. Malcolm's moves were generally made with great good-sense, and in this case with right feeling.

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## CHAPTER VII

# Treaty of Mandasor

AFTER the conclusion of the Treaty of Rajghat Yashwantrao returned to Indore, where he was greeted by the people and acknowledged by them as the saviour of the *Holkarshahi* dominions. On his way home he exacted eighteen lakhs of rupees from the Raja of Jaipur. In February 1808, Kashirao Holkar died and for some time there was unrest in the southern parts of the dominion. Yashwantrao was believed to have caused the death of his elder brother. Kashirao's widow challenged Yashwantrao's authority. She along with Dadhu Khan, a partisan of Kashirao, put forward Mahipatrao's claim, as the legitimate descendant of Tukoji's brother, Ranoji. In March 1808 Yashwantrao sent a force which was defeated by Dadhu Khan. Consternation gripped Yashwantrao and the latter sent an urgent message to Amir Khan, who was then in Rajputana, to help him in his predicament. Amir Khan despatched four battalions and two thousand horse to assist Holkar, who then defeated the rebels. But Yashwantrao very soon lost his mental balance and became insane in October 1808. The insanity of Yashwantrao presaged ill for the Holkar State and Malcolm observed: "This Government has been verging to dissolution".<sup>1</sup> He died on October 20, 1811, and was succeeded by his son Malharrao Holkar, a minor. Tulsi Bai, the concubine of the late Yashwantrao, became regent; she was least respected by all sections of the people of *Holkarshahi*.<sup>2</sup> There were several factions at the Indore *darbar*. The army became very strong and began to control the politics of the Indore *darbar*. They had no sense of patriotism. They used to lend their support to the faction which would give them sufficient money. The army, though on the whole loyal to Malharrao Holkar, was beyond the control of the Government. Indiscipline and lawlessness in the army ate into the vitals of the administration. So anarchy and disorder became rampant in the State. The eclipse of the power of the regency led to the "total dissolution and decay of the Holkar Government".<sup>3</sup> The military power of the State was usurped by Amir Khan and Ghafur Khan.

It would not be out of place to record in brief the meteoric rise of Amir Khan, the dominant role which he played in the Holkar *darbar*

and his relations with the British. Amir Khan, an adventurer, who was born in 1769, joined Yashwantrao Holkar's service in 1798.<sup>4</sup> He served Holkar faithfully and shared sufferings with him during the momentous period of 1798-1802

When Yashwantrao was locked in a combat with the British during 1804-05 Amir Khan harassed the British forces in Bundelkhand. In 1804 he with a force of 5 000 horse attacked Captain Smith near the fort of Betwa and completely surprised him. In 1805 Amir Khan attacked the house of the Collector of Moradabad and tried to foment a revolt in Rohilkhand. But the timely action of Seton, the Resident at Delhi, foiled his plan. Amir Khan then joined his master in the vicinity of Bharatpur and began to harass the British forces. During the war period Amir Khan tried to revive the Maratha Confederacy against the British Government. He addressed a letter to the Raja of Nagpur and requested him to stand by the side of Yashwantrao. But the Bhonsle Raja did not join them. He also met Daulatrao Sinndia at Saugar in 1805 and urged him to fight unitedly against the British Government.

The political condition in Rajputana gave Amir Khan an opportunity to increase his power and strength. The British Government abrogated subsidiary treaties with the chiefs of Rajputana. Man Singh, the Raja of Jodhpur, and Jagat Singh, the Raja of Jaipur, were determined to gain the hand of Krishna Kumari, the princess of the Udaipur Rana. Amir Khan played there an opportunistic role. His help was sought by both of them and he exacted money from them. His master Yashwantrao remained silent, though his help was sought by Man Singh. In defiance of his master's order he committed ravages in Jodhpur and compelled Man Singh to yield him a *jagir* of four lakhs of rupees. For the first time he ignored his master and acted independently. He increased his military strength by recruiting some *Holkarshahi* Pindaris and starving soldiers of Holkar. Henceforth his relations with Yashwantrao began to deteriorate<sup>5</sup>

Political troubles broke out in Holkar's territories when Kashirao Holkar died in February 1808. His widow, supported by Dadhu Khan, a Commander of the late Kashirao, challenged Yashwantrao's authority and tried to instal into the headship of the dominion Mahipatrao, the son of late Tukoji's brother Ranoji. Yashwantrao sent a force against them which were defeated by Dadhu Khan in March 1808. Holkar had sent an urgent message to Amir Khan, who was then in Rajputana, to come to his help. The Pathan leader had despatched four battalions and two thousand cavalry to Yashwantrao's help. Holkar ultimately succeeded in defeating Dadhu Khan

and his followers. This timely help of Amir Khan paved the way for his ascendancy at the Holkar *darbar*.

Yashwantrao Holkar's health began to break down. He had betrayed fits of occasional mental derangement. The affairs of the Government were run by the ministers like Yamuna Bhao, Balaram Seth, who could hardly control the disaffected elements at the *darbar*.<sup>6</sup> Chaos, confusion and troubles broke out. Amir Khan realized that the opportunity had come to establish his authority there. Tulsi Bai felt insecure for herself as well as for her son Malharrao. She had sent a message to Amir Khan, who was in Rajputana, to come to Indore. He immediately repaired to Indore. To cloak his design and to avoid misunderstanding with some of Holkar's ministers, who did not like his interference in the affairs of State, Amir Khan declared that he had come to Holkar's camp only to see ailing Yashwantrao. But his real motive was to ascertain the strength of Holkar's army and to gain an ascendancy at the *darbar*. Soon after his arrival he began to foment troubles and conspiracies against the ministers like Balaram Seth and Chimnaji Bhao, who did not like him.

He demanded money for the payment of his troops. But the ministers refused to comply with his request. In order to gain control over the finance and administration he decided to effect a change in the ministry. This he did with the help of Bhao Bhaskar and Pentu Ali, who had unquestioned influence over the army and the State. Amir Khan then began to exert his power on the ministers and forced them to pay four lakhs of rupees for the payment of his soldiers, whose salaries fell into arrears for several years. The ministers in order to get rid of him asked him to collect tribute from Udaipur. But he showed no intention to leave the court as he had by then wielded enormous influence over the Holkar *darbar*. In fact during Yashwantrao's madness he became the *de facto* ruler of the State.

The inordinate influence of Amir Khan could not be ignored by Tulsi Bai, who for her own safety and to get the *masnad* for her son, had to depend on him as the main bulk of the army was under his control. She too grew tired with his High-handedness. But she did not want to offend him as she could not rely on the ministers, who seemed to be insincere to her interests. Amir Khan began to take advantage of the situation and was determined to exploit it to his own ends.

In April 1809 Amir Khan went to Bhopal, leaving the administration of the State to his brother-in-law Ghafur Khan. During his absence the ministers restored authority in the *darbar* and expelled Ghafur Khan. In March 1810 Amir Khan with a body of 10,000 cavalry entered into Holkar's territory. But he was allowed neither

to enter the court nor to see Holkar. He tried through his *vakils* to get the permission to visit Yashwantrao. But his request was turned down. When peaceful methods failed, he had to resort to arms. He proceeded towards Indore. On the way he was attacked. Holkar's troops were defeated. This success compelled Tulsi Bai and the ministers to come to negotiations with him. Emboldened by this success Amir Khan demanded the dismissal of ministers like Sobharam and Dharmaji Kunar. Tulsi Bai and Balaram Seth had to give their consent. Thus the main obstacle from his path was removed. Amir Khan re-established his authority over Holkar Government. Yashwantrao's death on October 27, 1811, and the minority of his son made Amir Khan the most powerful man in the *Holkarshahi* dominion. His force was further strengthened when Muhammad Khan, another Pathan leader, died and the latter's troop joined him. In the Pindari war the British Government decided to detach him from Holkar's cause, so that the predatory hordes could get little succour from him and the Marathas.

The Pindari menace created a sense of profound alarm on the British Government and Lord Moira asked Holkar to help him in the task of exterminating these marauders. The Governor-General through the Resident at Delhi expressed the desire that the British Government wanted to come to terms with the Holkar State for "destroying the Pindari system". He, first of all, demanded the cancellation of articles of the treaty of 1805 by which the British Government recognized the sovereign rights of Sindhia and Holkar over the Rajput States. Article 8 gave Holkar the right of collecting tribute from Jaipur, Udaipur, Bundi and Kota. Secondly, Holkar's Government must adopt the most vigorous measures for suppressing the Pindaris and putting an end to the predatory system in conjunction with the British Government. He laid down the conditions to which Holkar must accede. (1) Holkar must confirm the forts and territory which Amir Khan had been enjoying. The British Government guaranteed this to Amir Khan. (2) Malharrao and the Regent must place themselves under the protection of the British Government. They should retire to Khandesh or near the Narmada; vicinity of British troops would protect them against danger or molestation. (3) The Government of Holkar must abstain from all interference or connection with the States of Jaipur, Udaipur, Kota and Bundi and all States on the left bank of the Chambal. (4) With regard to the exclusion of Pindaris and other plunderers from the Holkar territory, he suggested that Holkar must be required to take a decisive part. Neutrality in such a "conjuncture of affairs" would

be regarded by the British Government and its allies "as a demonstration of a resolution to support the Pindaris."<sup>7</sup>

Holkar's court gave no definite reply to the proposals of the Governor-General. They remained passive and could not decide their course of action in the ensuing war. Malcolm suggested that the services of Amir Khan should be employed to induce the Holkar Government to join the confederacy. The British Government on December 3, 1817, concluded a treaty with Amir Khan. He was allowed to retain the territories which he had acquired from Holkar. With Amir Khan's withdrawal Holkar's cause was foredoomed to failure.

Lord Moira's military preparations against the Pindaris made the Marathas apprehensive of the ulterior object of the British Government. They apprehended that the forces, which the British Government mobilized, might be employed against them soon after the conclusion of the Pindari war. So clandestine negotiations among the Maratha chiefs had been going on. The Peshwa through a messenger sounded Holkar about the possibility of the formation of a Maratha Confederacy. A similar message was sent to the Sindhia *darbar*. It seemed that the two Maratha chiefs would unite and respond to the call of the Peshwa.<sup>8</sup> When Bajirao ordered the Holkar Government to furnish him with troops, a reply came from the Holkar *darbar* that their forces were ready to serve the Peshwa. The *Subhedar* of Malharrao wrote: "Though our bodies are separate, but our soul is one."<sup>9</sup> But the Holkar Government was badly in need of money to pay off the salaries of soldiers. So a request was made to Bajirao to grant a sum of five lakhs for the payment of troops. The Peshwa paid a sum of one and a half lakhs. The Holkar Government had taken charge of the families of all the Pindaris in Asirgarh and asked them to aid the Peshwa.

Bajirao's declaration of hostilities against the East India Company made the Indore *darbar* restive. Metcalfe, the Resident at Delhi, sent Captain Tod to Holkar to negotiate. Captain Tod, after his arrival at Holkar's court, fathomed the unfriendly attitude of the Maratha towards the British. They used the "most violent and hostile language" against the British Government.<sup>10</sup> When Bajirao attacked the British Residency at Poona, "the whole court" declared their resolution to adhere to the cause of the Peshwa. "The turbulent troops rejoiced in the prospect of a conflict and were again conciliated to the cause of their nominal prince."<sup>11</sup> Holkar's army accordingly commenced its march to the southward with the declared view of entering on active operation in support of the Peshwa.

Sir John Malcolm crossed the Narmada near Hindia on November 15, 1817, and Lieutenant-Colonel Adams at Hoshangabad on November 16, 1817. It was originally intended that Malcolm's force should be formed into two separate columns, so that he might prevent the escape of Chitu's *durrah* to the westward, "against which his operations were specially directed."<sup>12</sup>

Malcolm was in pursuit of Chitu. Chitu's flight towards Holkar's camp forced Malcolm to change his route from Talem, he moved westerly towards Ujjain "with the view of approximating Holkar's army and favouring a junction with Sir Thomas Hislop", who had crossed the Narmada. Malcolm without any loss of time addressed a letter to Holkar, warning him against the danger of giving asylum to Chitu, an enemy of the British Government. He also sent an officer to Holkar's *darbar* with the object of making the Maratha chief "fully acquainted with the view and intentions of the Governor-General".<sup>13</sup> On December 11 Malcolm moved further and arrived at Tajpur near Ujjain. On December 12 he joined Sir Thomas Hislop at Ujjain. There they waited for two days and on December 14 proceeded northward and reached Mahitpur. On the same evening they crossed the Sipra river and halted at Gunye. They opened fresh negotiations with Holkar in order "to bring matters to an early crisis".<sup>14</sup> Letters passed and *vakils* were received on each side. Though the vicinity of British troops induced Holkar's *darbar* to hold a more pacific and temporizing language, it was clear that there was no disposition to yield to the terms of the British Government.

The defeat of the Peshwa at Poona and the advance of the British troops near Ujjain caused anxiety to the Marathas. So Tulsi Bai sent a *vakil* with a letter to Malcolm, expressing her intention to discuss the terms of a treaty. It seemed to "wear the most promising feature of accommodation and peace".<sup>15</sup> In his letter to Tulsi Bai Malcolm proposed that the *sine qua non* of a treaty was the establishment of a Resident at her court and the cession of Galna as a depot. But Tulsi Bai, though aware of the danger, was helpless. The situation had gone beyond her control. A violent and powerful party removed Tulsi Bai and her prudent advisers from power. A sudden revolution was effected, in which Tulsi Bai and her ministers were arrested. The military chiefs at court carried her away on the night of December 20 to the bank of the Sipra where she was beheaded. All power were vested in the hands of the Pathan chiefs, who were clamorous for the battle. They broke off negotiations and commenced plundering the baggage of the British army. Malcolm

did not want that the situation should deteriorate further. When he saw that war was inevitable, he along with Hislop advanced against Holkar's army; and the battle of Mahitpur was fought on December 21, 1817.

Sir Thomas Hislop immediately issued instruction to several divisions and nominated Malcolm to command the line at his request. The force was composed of two brigades of cavalry and a brigade of horse artillery. Malcolm with an infantry brigade crossed the river and moved to the right bank of the Sīpra, while the Mysore auxiliary force were marching along the left side.

For the first time in his career Malcolm was going to lead the armies in battle. Though he started his career in the military service, Malcolm saw little of actual warfare. He decided to attack and occupy the ruined village, which was the centre of the Maratha army's stronghold. He gave orders for firing without waiting for the formation of two bodies, which were composed of his infantry division and the Madras infantry brigade. His impetuosity knew no bounds and without caring for military discipline he rushed headlong into the front line. When Colonel Scott tried to pacify him Malcolm's answer was, "Let us all be composed". This hasty step caused loss to the British troops. The Maratha guns did some damage to the forward line of the Company's troops. At another stage, when he continued to go forward, his *aid de camp* Syed Ibrahim rode up to Captain Borthwick and cried, "Look at the General. He is in front of our men, who are firing. For God's sake bring him back".<sup>16</sup> In spite of lapses on the part of the General, the Marathas were defeated. "The destructions of Holkar's army . . . were complete."

"The battle was won by the valour of the sepoy, and not by the tactics of the Commander".<sup>17</sup> The British victory was hardly praiseworthy. More than thirty European officers and seven hundred men were either wounded or killed. The Marathas lost sixty guns. Two thousand of their infantry were killed in the battle-field.

Malcolm's services were highly commended by Sir Thomas Hislop as well as by John Adam, the Political Secretary to the Governor-General. In his despatch to the Governor-General Hislop acknowledged "the great and essential aid" he had derived from Malcolm's counsels.<sup>18</sup> "His Lordship has received with no less approbation". Adam wrote to him: "The ability, energy and judgment displayed by you in conducting under the authority of His Excellency Sir Thomas Hislop, the means productive of so speedy and advantageous a termination to a war towards the brilliant and rapid success of which your personal exertions and gallantry in the field had already contributed in so eminent a degree."<sup>19</sup>



The battle of Mahitpur completely broke up Holkar's army. Malharrao Holkar was a fugitive. He sent his minister Tantia Jogh to Malcolm's camp to conclude a treaty at Mandasor. Malcolm dictated the following conditions for immediate acceptance: (1) Holkar would have to recognize the cession of territories to Zalim Singh of Kota and Amir Khan. (2) The British Government would take Holkar's remaining territories under its protection and maintain an army to preserve the tranquillity of the country. The Maratha envoy attempted to "induce an alteration of the terms proposed".<sup>20</sup> He stated that if these conditions were accepted, his master would have to lose a large part of his territory which were ancient as well as best part of his master's dominions. Tantia Jogh also objected to the grant of territory to Amir Khan, the reference to Amir Khan in the treaty was considered highly insulting. He also told Malcolm that Holkar was not responsible for the war. The conflagration was "provoked . . . by a council of discontented and turbulent military chiefs."<sup>21</sup> To the objections of Tantia Jogh the Governor-General's view was that Amir Khan had been for years the undisputed master of the lands which the British Government had granted to him. He had ceased to act under any control. "He was no longer the servant but the master of Holkar Government." So the minister's objection was "manifestly without foundation".<sup>22</sup> The Maratha agent began to bargain but Malcolm did not change his attitude. The envoy had no other alternative; so on January 6, 1818, he signed the Treaty of Mandasor. The terms of the treaty were the following: (1) Malhar-rao Holkar would have to renounce all territories which the British Government granted to Amir Khan. (2) The Parganas of Patchur, Dug, Gungrar, Aur and others were ceded by Malharrao to Zalim Singh of Kota. (3) Malharrao Holkar agreed to give up all claims of tribute and revenue of every description which he had over the Rajput States. (4) He also ceded his claims to the territories south of the Satpura range. (5) He was to maintain a British force in his territories for internal order. (6) He would reduce his troops to 3,000 horse. (7) He would have to submit all foreign disputes to the arbitration of the British Government and to abstain from any communication with other powers. (8) The British Government would not allow the Peshwa to exercise his sovereign right over Holkar. These articles received the Governor-General's entire approval.

Malcolm was not immediately relieved of the duty even after the conclusion of the treaty. He was entrusted with the task of restoring and maintaining the peace in Holkar's dominions. The

territories of Holkar for "a series of years" had been the scene of the most active disturbers.<sup>23</sup> The Governor-General was desirous of "deriving the greatest benefit "from Malcolm's useful and zealous labours" in the task of "establishing the distracted government of Holkar".<sup>24</sup>

Soon after the end of the battle of Mahitpur, there remained two regiments in Holkar's army. To serve their own interest they joined some chiefs. Of the two one known as the "Barra Bhye" set out for the Deccan to join the Peshwa.<sup>25</sup> The other was composed of the remains of the Pathan battalion under two leaders, Rushan Beg and Rushan Khan. They seized the town of Rampura and threw off their allegiance to the Holkar State. The Holkar Government failed to suppress them. Tantia Jogh urged General Malcolm to "assist the Government in suppressing this rebellion."<sup>26</sup> Malcolm directed Major-General Browne, who was near the Chambal, to march rapidly to Rampura. Browne immediately made a rapid advance and carried the town by assault. He captured their guns and "completely dispersed the party". The Governor-General in his despatch to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors wrote: "With this exploit ended all serious opposition to the re-establishment of Holkar Government in the territory remaining to it and to the successful operation of the new alliance."<sup>27</sup> The surplus troops were discharged. Malcolm gave an advance of four lakhs of rupees to the Holkar Government for their immediate payment. The sum was given in return of the "security of the revenue of Konch."<sup>28</sup>

At that time there appeared an impostor who called himself Malharrao Holkar. He gathered round him some Arabs and disbanded troops. With their help he tried to create trouble in the newly reorganized country. On receipt of this news Malcolm proceeded against him and suppressed the revolt with a strong hand.

Malcolm's task was not easy. The refractory zamindars in Sondwara district began to create troubles. They did not acknowledge the suzerainty of the British Government. Their suppression was necessary for the "security and tranquillity" of the country.<sup>29</sup> They were in fact the "leaders of Banditti". Their plundering activities were concentrated in the region from Hindia to Maheshwar. These zamindars gave a stout resistance to the Government. Within a short time they were brought into submission. There were other predators, whom Malcolm by persuasion succeeded in harnessing for restoring peace and order in the Holkar's dominions. After five months he wrote to the Governor-General:

"It is six months since I left Ujjain (Ougein) and from that date to the present moment this force has been divided into small

detachments, which have traversed every path and every ghat of the forest between Hindia and Moheysir (Maheswar), and it is a remarkable fact that though the country abounds with Bheels and robbers, under numerous chiefs, alike celebrated for their habits of rapacity and violence, not a rupee of property has been stolen or a camp-follower hurt. These plunderers have, on the contrary, expressed their earnest hope that I would take their condition into consideration; and provide means of livelihood less criminal and hazardous than that to which they had long been compelled by necessity."<sup>30</sup>

To quote his own words from a letter to one of his friends we find, "The old ruin of this place and the celebrated city of Mandu have for more than a century been shared by tigers and Bheels, more destructive than the tigers in their ravages. The tigers I shot; the Bheels are my friends and now serve in a corps I have raised to cultivate lands."<sup>31</sup>

The jungles were cleared off and roads were constructed in every direction. His administration had created confidence in the minds of the people. The fair at a holy place near Mahitpur, which remained unvisited for long seventy years, was "a week ago" visited by thirty thousand people. He became astonished when he heard that the people at the fair began to shout in joy "*Jai* Malcolm, *Jai* Malcolm" (Success to Malcolm). His name had a magic spell to the patients. Malcolm himself narrated in his work that once the *Bhil* women were tying strings on the right arms of their children and the priest was pronouncing the name of Malcolm three times. The pronunciation of his name was believed to have a sovereign cure for fever.

## Notes and References

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2. *Holkarshahicha Itihas*, II, pp. 159-60.
3. For. Sec. Cons. October 28, 1817, No. 8; John Adam to C.T. Metcalfe, October 1, 1817.
4. Baswan Lal, *Memoirs of a Pathan Soldier*, p. 95.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 309.
6. *Holkarshahicha Itihas*, Part II, p. 136.
7. For. Sec. Cons. October 28, 1817, No. 8; John Adam to C.T. Metcalfe, October 1, 1817.
8. *Holkarshahicha Itihas*, II, p. 160.
9. *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar*, Vol. 41, No. 161.
10. For. Sec. Procs. March 1, 1820, Para 75; Letters to the Court.
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18. For. Sec. Cons. February 20, 1818, No. 10; Thomas Hislop to the Governor-General, January 7, 1818.
19. For. Sec. Cons. February 13, 1818, No. 4; John Adam to Brigadier-General John Malcolm, January 20, 1818.
20. For. Sec. Cons. January 23, 1818, No. 39; John Malcolm to John Adam, January 6, 1818.
21. *Ibid.*
22. For. Sec. Procs. February 13, 1818, No. 4; John Adam to Brigadier-General John Malcolm, January 20, 1818.
23. *Ibid.*, Also *Holkarshahicha Itihas*, II, p. 209.
24. *Ibid.*
25. For. Sec. Procs. March 1, 1820, Para 80; Letters to the Court.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid.*
28. For. Pol. Cons. November 21, 1818, No. 55; John Malcolm to the Governor-General, 1818.
29. For. Sec. Procs. March 1, 1820, Para 81; Letters to the Court.
30. Pol. Dept. Diary No. 449, pp. 3384-85; John Malcolm to the Marquess of Hastings, May 10, 1818.
31. *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER VIII

### Nagpur Affairs

RAGHUJI BHONSLE fought in cooperation with Daulatrao Sindhia against the British in 1803. He sustained defeat along with Sindhia at the hands of the British and signed the Treaty of Devgaon on December 17, 1803. After that he maintained an attitude of sullen indifference to the Maratha Confederacy and confined his attention to the protection of the territory of Nagpur against future British inroads. He refused to sign the Subsidiary Treaty despite repeated British pressure. Raghuji died on March 22, 1816. His death facilitated British penetration in Nagpur which he had so long resisted. He was succeeded by his son Parsoji Bhonsle (Bala Saheb), who was an "idiot" and was unsuited for imperial task.<sup>1</sup> Hence his cousin Mudhoji Bhonsle, better known as Appasaheb, was appointed regent of the new ruler.<sup>2</sup>

Appasaheb's appointment to the office of the regent was not without opposition. Fresh troubles began to start. Raghuji's widow and the mother of Parsoji, Baka Bai, perceived that as Parsoji had no male heir, Appasaheb was the prospective heir to the house of Bhonsle. So Baka Bai persuaded Parsoji to adopt a son. This measure would destroy the claim of Appasaheb.

The British Resident at Nagpur watched the development keenly and found this to be an opportune moment to establish British influence at the court of Nagpur. So Richard Jenkins persuaded Appasaheb to accept the Subsidiary Alliance. With a view to strengthening his position at Nagpur, Appasaheb applied to the British Resident for help. On May 28, 1816, the Subsidiary Treaty was signed.<sup>3</sup> According to the terms of the treaty, a contingent of three thousand horse and two thousand foot would stay in the neighbourhood of Nagpur until Appasaheb had firmly established his position.

This arrangement gave the British Government an opportunity to complete "its circle of political alliances in the Deccan." The friendship between Appasaheb and the British Government was reciprocated with the former's presentation of a "diamond ring"<sup>4</sup> to Richard Jenkins, the British Resident at Nagpur and the latter's grant of pension to Appasaheb's ministers. Thereupon a British force under Colonel Doveton arrived at Nagpur on June 18 in order to

crush all possible opposition to Appasaheb. By the end of October 1816, Appasaheb had completely established his authority. So the struggle for political supremacy between Appasaheb and Baka Bai forced the former to enter into the British web of alliance. As a result of Appasaheb's signing the treaty, the Maratha State of Nagpur became feudatory under British protection. Appasaheb for personal gains bartered away the independence of his State.

But British friendship could not save Appasaheb from intriguers. Parsoji's mother Baka Bai, his wife Kashi Bai and other prominent influential officials entered into a conspiracy to oust Appasaheb. Apprehending danger Appasaheb left Nagpur and lived in the suburban camp where the Subsidiary force was stationed. Here he made up his mind to do away with Parsoji and secure full powers in his own hands. On February 1, 1817, Parsoji was found dead in his bed.<sup>5</sup> Jenkins made an inquiry but did not discover any definite proof of the murder. It is said that Appasaheb caused Parsoji to be secretly strangled.

Parsoji was succeeded by Appasaheb. His relations with the British were cordial up to the middle of 1817. Sir John Malcolm, the Governor-General's Political Agent, paid a visit to Nagpur on September 23, 1817, to make the Raja apprised of the Governor-General's plans against the Pindaris. The British Government demanded Garhmandal from Bhonsle and wanted to make it a military camp against the Pindari outposts at Bhopal, Rahatgarh, Suranj and Bhilsa. This would enable the British forces to destroy the strongholds of the Pindaris lying between Bundelkhand and Burhanpur.<sup>6</sup> Appasaheb demonstrated his willingness to abide by the direction of the Governor-General. Malcolm had a full discussion with the Raja relating to "the supplies, to the employment of the contingent and to the direction of the campaign. . . ."<sup>7</sup> The Raja assured Malcolm of his "complete devotion to the English Government."<sup>8</sup> Malcolm at the time of leaving the court sensed no "unfriendly feeling" from the Raja to the British Government. Appasaheb also pledged himself to dismiss the *vakils* of foreign powers at his court and recall his *vakils* from other courts. In terms of the late treaty he guaranteed not to enter into negotiations with foreign powers "without the privity and concurrence" of the British Government.

But Appasaheb did not cease to be a factor in the political turmoil of those days. For several months secret negotiations among the Maratha chiefs had been going on. The Raja responded to the call of the Peshwa when the latter sought help from him. Khando

support me, I will come to his camp and obey all orders.”<sup>14</sup> Malcolm advised Sheoprasad that it would be proper for the ex-Raja to surrender himself to Richard Jenkins, the British Resident at the court of Nagpur. Sheoprasad told Malcolm that Appasaheb “considered himself a criminal in the eyes of Jenkins.”<sup>15</sup> So he decided to throw himself on the mercy and generosity of Malcolm, who had a reputation for these qualities.

John Adam, Political Secretary to Lord Hastings, authorized John Malcolm to accept the submission of Appasaheb if he renewed the offer. In the same letter John Adam apprised Malcolm that the Governor-General would make an arrangement of “an income to support Appasaheb decorously as a private individual of rank, and would promise him all becoming attentions if he would take up his Residence within the Company’s provinces. . . .”<sup>16</sup> As regards the amount of pension the Governor-General at present was not prepared to fix it as it would depend upon the number and composition of his family. But if that would remain as an obstacle to submission Malcolm was directed to assure the ex-Raja that he would be given a sum of one lakh of rupees for his maintenance.

Appasaheb was not willing to submit immediately. He made the overtures with “the view of ensuring an eventual resource should he fail in the intrigues which he was at the same time actually prosecuting.”<sup>17</sup> On July 28, 1818, Malcolm addressed a letter to Appasaheb advising the latter to surrender immediately. He should not unnecessarily plunge into the “extreme of hostilities”. In the same letter he assured the ex-Raja that “in case of surrendering himself he should not experience any humiliating treatment or be kept in a fort.”<sup>18</sup> Moreover a residence would be assigned to him where he might live “becomingly and comfortably with his family in a private character.”<sup>19</sup> Malcolm did not fail to give Appasaheb a warning. He pointed out to Sheoprasad in strong terms that “the ruinous consequences . . . would attend the ex-Raja if he delayed in acceding to the terms offered in answer to the overtures.”<sup>20</sup> But the intimidation had no effect.

From his sanctuary Appasaheb made several attempts to crush the British forces at Nagpur with the help of influential citizens and local rajas. He opened correspondence with the influential citizens at Nagpur. They had worked hard to organize and enrol bodies of armed adherents in the interior for him. They also supplied him with money for the collection and payment of troops in the frontier. Large bodies of Arabs were flocking to the standard of the ex-Raja. It is said that the machinations of Appasaheb were carried to a wide

extent. He instigated the people of the province of Chhatisgarh to resort to insurrection. But the plot was discovered and foiled. He also asked a local raja and the chieftain to attack the British forces. Appasaheb also opened connections with various chiefs of Bhopal. But the timely actions of the British officers frustrated all these spasmodic efforts of Appasaheb. Malcolm reported to the Governor-General that one Amritrao Pundit was employed at Ujjain in various intrigues for Appasaheb. He was assisted by Abdulla Khan who brought from Nagpur a woman of rank, who was in the ex-Raja's palace and helped Abdulla Khan with money. Abdulla Khan enlisted about two hundred Arabs in Ujjain for Appasaheb's service. It is said that this was done in consonance with the wish of Daulatrao Sindhia. The plot was discovered and precautionary measures were adopted to prevent Appasaheb from crossing the Narmada.

Appasaheb made an attempt to seduce the Company's sepoys at Nagpur from their loyalty to the British service. The principal conspirators were seized and sent by the Nagpur Government for confinement.

Elphinstone detected a plot formed by Appasaheb with Chintamanrao Patwardhan, a Maratha Jagirdar of Miraj. They excited the other chiefs in the region to revolt against the British Government. Captain Jones succeeded in suppressing the revolt. "Every assemblage in arms for the ex-Raja was successively dispersed."<sup>21</sup> Appasaheb was hotly pursued by the British forces. He proceeded then towards Asirgarh. He was there with Chitu and a few attendants, in the "greatest state of misery and distress". He fell a prey to severe illness.<sup>22</sup>

Chitu's son Muhammad Puna after his submission related to Malcolm that he was sent by Yashwantrao Bhao to assist Appasaheb or to bring him off to Asirgarh in case of extremity. He stated further that he had accompanied Appasaheb from the Mahadeo hills, but he had not been permitted to enter the fortress with Appasaheb after their discomfiture. From the fort of Asirgarh Appasaheb opened correspondence with Malcolm expressing his desire to surrender. He stated that he was not his master; he was in the power of another person. But Appasaheb was not sincerely desirous of surrendering himself to Malcolm. He opened the negotiation with the intention that he might be treated liberally if the fort was occupied and he was arrested. Very soon he escaped from Burhanpur in the guise of a *Fakir*. He was helped in the adventure by a sepoy. When the fall of Asirgarh seemed imminent "Appasaheb was counselled to put himself beyond the reach of British preponderance".<sup>23</sup> He



proceeded consequently to Lahore, where he was allowed to "live in absolute privacy on a very scanty allowance from Ranjit Singh."<sup>24</sup>

Sulking at Punjab, Appasaheb craved Malcolm's indulgence by pointing out the miserable plight in which he had been placed. His case was so hopeless that it was despaired of even by those who were interested in his welfare. A southern Brahmin named Gopalrao came from Appasaheb with a letter to Malcolm. Appasaheb expressed his willingness to submit. Perhaps he attempted to ascertain "what indulgence Appasaheb could expect from the British Government should he find it necessary to throw himself upon its humanity."<sup>25</sup> Malcolm did not attach any importance to the proposal of the ex-Raja. Appasaheb's last years were shrouded in mystery. He died in Jodhpur in 1844.

## Notes and References

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22. For. Sec. Cons. April 8, 1819, No. 71; Statement of Muhammad Puna.
23. *Ibid.*, April 17, 1819, No. 26; Translation of a letter from Appakhan to John Malcolm, March 18, 1819.
24. *Rajputana Agency Correspondence*, Serial No. 23; John Malcolm to George Swington, June 11, 1821.
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## CHAPTER IX

# Fall of Asirgarh

THE Governor-General forced Daulatrao Sindhia to hand over temporarily the fort of Asirgarh to the British Government. The reason was that the possession of the fort by the British Government would interrupt the march of the Pindari and Maratha forces between Poona, Gwalior and Nagpur.<sup>1</sup> Sindhia was compelled to sign the Treaty of Gwalior which was ratified on November 6, 1817. The treaty empowered the British forces to take all necessary measures which might be required for the possession of Asirgarh. Yashwantrao Bhao was the killedar of the fort. At the time of making the treaty it was explained to Daulatrao that should the killedar disobey his master's (Sindhia's) order, the British Government should cease to consider Yashwantrao and his garrison in the service of Sindhia. The British Government would then retain Asirgarh when reduced as "a legitimate conquest". All these measures were adopted as Asirgarh occupied an advantageous position.

Lord Hastings decided to give up his claim on Asirgarh as Sindhia displayed a conciliatory attitude in the Pindari war. Moreover the British troops destined to occupy it were busy in their operations against the Pindaris in another quarter. The Governor-General despatched his instructions to the Resident at Gwalior.

Before these instructions reached the Resident at Gwalior, Yashwantrao had committed an act of hostility by opening a heavy fire from his artillery on a detachment of the Company's troops, who were skirting the fort to intercept Bajirao. It was interpreted by the Resident at Gwalior as an "outrage". So a demand was made to Sindhia to appoint another commander to the fort of Asirgarh and to direct Yashwantrao Bhao to transfer the command to his successor. Should Bhao refuse to do that, the place would be attacked by the Company's troops and after that it would be delivered over to Sindhia. Of course, Sindhia would not have to bear any additional charge for its siege.<sup>2</sup>

Yashwantrao Bhao's activities were highly provocative to Malcolm and Doveton. Bhao contacted Appasaheb who had entered the Mahadeo hills after his flight from a place near Jubbulpur. The killedar had not only given protection to Appasaheb, but also to

Chitu, the *Bhils* and other enemies of the British Government. From Dhulkot Bajirao had sent some officers to Bhao, who made arrangements to escort the *Shrimant* to the fort<sup>3</sup>; and through the *Karkuns* he had sent the Peshwa clothes and food. All these measures highly incensed the British Government. Malcolm remarked: "The English Government would have never delayed operations but due to the dignity and respect of Daulat Rao Scindiah."<sup>4</sup> He addressed three letters to Yashwantrao Bhao, requesting the latter to hand over Appasaheb, Chitu and others whom the British Government considered their enemies. Bhao in reply to the letters stated: "I swear by the Maharajah's feet, I gave no protection to Appasaheb."<sup>5</sup>

Captain Stewart, the Resident, intimated these facts to Daulatrao who declared his resolution to recall Yashwantrao Bhao immediately from Asirgarh. Necessary orders were despatched to that effect. Sindhia accused Bhao of embittering the relations with the British Government. He also sent him a warning: "Should you oppose the army in any manner, you will incur my displeasure."<sup>6</sup> Yashwantrao at last offered to repair to Gwalior if he was furnished with a passport from the Resident to secure him in his way. The passport was accordingly put into the hands of Sindhia. Yashwantrao Bhao also applied to General Doveton for a passport as he decided to proceed towards Gwalior on February 18. He, however, had a "pretext for delay". His clothes, he said, were not ready.<sup>7</sup>

Malcolm was convinced that Appasaheb was in the fort. This was based on the direct testimony of a person who was with Appasaheb. In a letter to the Governor-General on February 19, 1819, Malcolm affirmed, on the basis of information transmitted by a *Jamadar*, that Appasaheb was in the upper fort. He also got some information of Appasaheb from Muhammad Puna, son of Chitu. Puna testified that he and his father, on the surrender of Bajirao, asked Yashwantrao Bhao what they and their followers should do. Bhao asked them to remain in the neighbourhood of Asirgarh and maintain themselves by plunder. Soon after he advised them to join Appasaheb, whom he had invited to come and take refuge at Asirgarh, if necessary. This information was also received by Fazil Khan, an employee of the Raja. Appasaheb was invited thrice by Yashwantrao Bhao to come to Asirgarh. Chitu and his son joined Appasaheb, and, on the latter's quitting the Mahadeo hills, they brought him to a garden outside the fort; then they were directed by Yashwantrao Bhao to leave him. Muhammad Puna, however, did not know whether he entered the fort. It was probable that the Pindari leaders were sent away with the object that they might not

be able to bear witness to the admission of Appasaheb into the fort. One of Malcolm's agents, who had introduced himself in the garri-sons, stated to Malcolm that he had a conversation with Appasaheb in the upper fort. The ex-Raja transmitted an overture to Malcolm through him.

Yashwantrao's conduct indicated that war was the only means of ending the deadlock. The Resident was directed to tell Sindhia that if Appasaheb had been admitted into Asirgarh the fort must be besieged. So he was requested to send a body of his cavalry to join in the investment.

On February 15, 1819, John Malcolm had written to Yashwantrao Bhao that if he did not obey the orders of his master which were on their way to him then within five days after their receipt he would be treated as a "rebel to his Government".<sup>8</sup> Bhao gave an evasive reply. He wrote that he had gone to wait upon Bajirao, who was in his vicinity. He justified his conduct by saying that the Peshwa was the head of the Marathas and entitled to the obeisance of all of them. On February 25, 1819, Malcolm again asked Yashwantrao to quit Asirgarh, otherwise preparations for the siege would not be suspended. He would be allowed even to leave the fort to the command of any individual of his family. "Extreme moderation was shown to Yashwantrao Bhao to prevent extremities."<sup>9</sup> Malcolm sent his native *aide de camp* to implore upon Bhao to leave the fort immediately. Yashwantrao declared that he would not quit the fortress and asserted his confidence that Sindhia would aid him if he was attacked.

Yashwantrao Bhao got a passport from the acting Resident and another from Doveton. Arrangements were also made for escorting him to Gwalior. Necessary precautions were taken so that he might not be insulted on the way. Bhao then pretended that he was alarmed "for the safety of his person" as his fort was surrounded by the British troops.<sup>10</sup> He also told Malcolm that he had written to his master for the despatch of a *Huzuriah*, who would take the charge of the fort.

Malcolm advised Bhao to leave the fort by March 5, 1819, and deliver it to any person whom Bhao might choose. Malcolm assured Bhao that if he left the fort by that date, preparations for the reduction of Asirgarh would cease. If he acted to the contrary Yashwantrao and all his adherents would be proclaimed traitors. Malcolm also gave him good counsel, telling him that he could save his fortune and his life and also preserve for his master the fort of Asirgarh. But when Malcolm heard that Daulatrao Sindhia had sent Kondaji,

a *Huzuriah*, to take the fort from Bhao, he requested General Doveton to suspend operations against Yashwantrao up to March 15 or 16. This shows Malcolm's moderation and his consideration for the Maratha killedar of Asirgarh. Kondaji entered the fort on March 16. But Yashwantrao's attitude did not change. He said that he could never reconcile himself to the idea that his master would deprive him of his command in the fort. For Malcolm this was too much, he could no longer admit excuses. In a proclamation he stated: "This was another excuse for delay and disobedience."<sup>11</sup> When Malcolm referred to the repeated orders of his master to hand over the fort to the English troops, Bhao answered that to the Maratha Government the orders had different meanings. "They were generally given to meet the exigency of the movement and with no expectation of their being obeyed."<sup>12</sup> He narrated further that it was customary to the Europeans to listen to the orders of their superiors. In short, he would not hand over the fort willingly to the British troops.

When all prospects of negotiations seemed bleak General Doveton declared war against Bhao on March 18, 1819. He arranged the troops in the following way: "he was to attack the fort from the western side and Malcolm from the eastern side. Doveton's army was composed of the royal Scots, a wing of the 30th regiment and the 67th regiment and a battalion of the 7th Nagpur infantry force. Malcolm's force consisted of two battalions of Madras sepoys, a regiment and a battalion of Bombay sepoys, and a regiment of Madras cavalry. General Watson with three Bengal corps and a cavalry corps was close by.

It is necessary to give a brief description of the geographical position and strategic importance of Asirgarh. Asirgarh is situated in 21° 28' N and 76° 18' E, about twelve miles nearly due north of Burhanpur.<sup>13</sup> The hill on which Asirgarh was built is a spur of the Satpura range, with an elevation of about 2,300 feet above the sea, and nearly 900 feet above the plain. The summit of the hill, a space about sixty acres in extent, was amply provided with water from numerous reservoirs and ponds. Access to the top was barred by inaccessible cliffs, from eighty to a hundred and twenty feet high. The natural strength of the position had been enhanced by some lines of fortification, supplemented by a massive outwork at the western end. It was not easy to occupy this fortress simply with artillery and ordinary warlike stores. The garrison was surrounded on all sides so that there could be no ingress and egress from the fort. Malcolm wrote to his wife: "I have no opinion either of the garrison or the Commander, and we have means enough to blow

them and their work off the face of the earth.”<sup>14</sup> To make an effective attack on the lower fort Malcolm tried and worked hard to establish his batteries. He wrote to Adam: “I have no sleep for twenty-four hours.” He and Doveton on March 18 occupied Baticalnallah and there was no opposition. On March 20 a breach was effected. From March 22 to March 29 there was lull in the operations. Doveton had been waiting for the heavy battering guns from Saugor to make the attack effective. In the meantime on March 27 Malcolm selected a place to the south-west of Asirgarh. This would enable him to take possession of Malairgarh. He placed a couple of twelve pounders and a few howitzers there. This compelled Bhao to withdraw to the top. On the other side another battery was constructed to the south-west of Malirgarh. This would effect a corresponding breach. On March 29 the lower fort was occupied and Bhao evacuated the place. On April 3 the Saugor battering train arrived. This added new strength to the existing force. The attack was renewed vigorously. There was incessant firing. The weight of attack was felt by Bhao. The spirit of the killedar was broken. He thought it useless to protract the struggle and sued for the terms of peace. He begged Malcolm to grant him liberal terms. At last on April 9 Yashwantrao surrendered unconditionally. The British occupied Asirgarh, one of the strongest forts of India.

Soon after the occupation of the fort “a singular detection occurred”. A number of letters were found “in a small writing case” of Yashwantrao Bhao.<sup>15</sup> Bajirao had deposited in Asirgarh jewels of very great value; and Yashwantrao was called upon to produce them. Bhao replied that Bajirao had afterwards demanded them, and that they had been consequently returned to him. The answer appeared to be unsatisfactory and he was told that “his own property would be sequestered till he delivered those jewels.”<sup>16</sup> He was constrained to exhibit Bajirao’s receipt. After persuasion Bhao opened a small casket before an officer who was acquainted with Sindhia’s writing. The officer observed a paper which was supposed to have been written by Sindhia. His sudden recognition of it produced such visible confusion in Yashwantrao Bhao that the officer inferred there must be something wrong in it. He immediately seized the casket and a bundle of private papers was brought to Malcolm.

In his despatch to Metcalfe, Malcolm gave a summary of the content of the seized letters.

The first letter was written by Sharzarao Nimbalkar to Yashwantrao. There he considered the approach of Bajirao to Asirgarh as important. This would give Sindhia an opportunity to

champion the cause of the Maratha Empire. It was necessary for Yashwantrao Bhao and Sindhia to "assemble every man they could."<sup>17</sup>

The second letter had no seal or signature. It was supposed to have been written either by Sindhia or written by his order to Yashwantrao Bhao. It conveyed a clear indication that Yashwantrao "must not attend to the order for the occupation of Asseer (Asirgarh) which circumstances have made it necessary to give the English Government."<sup>18</sup>

The third letter seemed anonymous. From the date and content of the letter it appeared that the letter was either written by Bajirao himself or written at his desire. It contained nothing important.

The fourth letter was considered by Malcolm very important. It was written by Sindhia. He welcomed Bajirao's hostilities against the British Government. The date of the letter was December 22, 1818. Probably it was written after Bajirao had commenced hostilities.

The fifth and sixth letters were despatched from Bajirao to Yashwantrao Bhao. The content of the letters clearly indicated that Bajirao's rising against the British Government inspired confidence in the minds of Sindhia and Yashwantrao Bhao. The Peshwa expected "every aid from the killedar of Asirgarh and his belief that aid would be given with the full assent of Dowlut Row Sindhia."<sup>19</sup>

The seventh letter was written by Appasaheb to Yashwantrao. He had written this letter soon after his escape from confinement. There he expressed his desire to "throw himself upon the protection" of Yashwantrao.<sup>20</sup>

In this connection one should remember that "the siege of Asseergurh (Asirgarh) was undertaken with an idea that Appasaheb was in the place." But after the occupation of the fort Appasaheb was not discovered there. Charles Metcalfe wrote to Malcolm: "It was acknowledged by Yashwantrao Lar that Appasaheb was for some time protected under cover of the fortress though not received within it."<sup>21</sup>

After his surrender Yashwantrao Bhao told Malcolm that he had been forbidden by Sindhia "to deliver the fortress to any person whatever on a written order, unless the order should be accompanied by a private token fixed between the Maharajah and Yashwantrao Lar."<sup>22</sup> He added further that the token was not given to Kandoji or in any other manner. He further avowed that he was ordered by Sindhia to aid Bajirao to the utmost.

The acting Resident was directed to hand over these letters to Sindhia which were written by himself. Accordingly the Resident solicited a public audience from Sindhia. Daulatrao requested that



the discussion should not be in the *darbar*, but in a private room. He added that the Resident might bring there Sindhia's ministers and any person whom he liked. Before the meeting, he had shown Sindhia's letter to one of his principal ministers, who thought that it was his master's handwriting. The fact was not mentioned to Sindhia, but the Resident put the letters into Sindhia's hands and said that he was directed by the Governor-General to ask if he could deny his own writing. Sindhia, aware of further consequences, confessed that the writing was his. He then endeavoured to "extenuate his conduct by appealing to the embarrassment in which he stood in regard to Bajirao."<sup>23</sup> He told the Resident that he had decided to submit unconditionally to the directions of the Governor-General. He became surprised when he was told that the Governor-General would retain Asirgarh, "not as a punishment but as a security which the late events had proved to be indispensable."<sup>24</sup> Sindhia became exceedingly glad when he was informed that if he would act in future for the British Government his past activities should be carried "in oblivion the British Government would do its utmost to support his dignity and effective measures would be employed to ameliorate the condition of his affairs."<sup>25</sup> With the British occupation of Asirgarh the third Anglo-Maratha war was brought to a conclusion in all its stages. The Maratha State remained in India not as an independent power but as a subservient clog in the wheel of British imperialism. The third Maratha war enabled the British to emerge as the dominant power in the Indian body-politic.

## Notes and References

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## CHAPTER X

# Malcolm on the Marathas

WITH the conclusion of the Pindari and the last Maratha war John Malcolm's military role came to an end. He was entrusted with the reorganization of Sindhia, Holkar and Pawar's territories in Malwa. These fragments of territories came to be organized as the Central India Agency. As Agent for the Central India Agency (1818-1822), and then as Governor of Bombay (1827-1830), Malcolm left interesting accounts of the Marathas and their institutions. He observed and studied the Maratha institutions minutely. In his writings and despatches he pointed out the merits and defects of their institutions. A utilitarian in his philosophical outlook, he displayed his sympathy with their ways of life.

The Maratha Empire was a loose confederacy of feudal military chiefs who enjoyed virtually an independent status. The sub-division of revenues engendered among the Maratha chiefs "perpetual feuds and jealousies" which prevented them from combining wholeheartedly against a common enemy and was ultimately responsible to a large extent for the downfall of the Maratha Empire. In the administrative organization these feudal chiefs continued the legacy of their master Peshwa.<sup>1</sup> The administrative set-up at Poona was the model which the Sardars introduced in their *jagirs*.

Under the Marathas there was no rigid separation of powers.<sup>2</sup> The chief was the head of his administrative division. In this task he was assisted by the *Diwan* and the *Phadnavis*. (1) The *Diwan* may be termed as the Prime Minister, who had superintendence and control over every department in the State, subject to the supreme power and sanction of the ruler himself. (2) The *Phadnavis* was the head civil officer, who received the accounts given by the collectors of revenue. It was his duty to exhibit schedules of the actual revenue and form estimates of probable receipt and expenditure. He was to inspect all accounts of public disbursements of every district.

Under the Central Government at Poona, besides the *Diwan* and the *Phadnavis*, there were officers like *Sar Subhedars* and *Mamlatsdars*. In the three provinces like Khandesh, Gujarat and Karnatak, the administration was run by *Sar Subhedars*. Their position may be

compared to that of modern Commissioners.<sup>3</sup> They were authorized by the Peshwa to use the seal of the Deputy (*Mutalaqi Shiqqa*).<sup>4</sup> They were the highest authority in their divisions, both fiscal and judicial. The *Sar Subhedar* of Khandesh had only the powers of general superintendence.

The territories like *Sarkar*, *Subha* or *Prant* yielding a revenue of more than a lakh of rupees was placed under an officer called *Mamlatdar*. He was the Peshwa's representative in the districts and was in charge of administrative and judicial duties. He was appointed either by the Peshwa or by his *Dewan*. Some *Mamlatdars* around the city of Poona were allowed to use the *Mutalaqishiqqa*.<sup>5</sup> He was the "backbone" of the administration. The post of *Mamlatdar* was sold to the highest bidder. Elphinstone observed: "The office of *Mamlatdar* was put up to auction among the Peshwa's attendants, who were encouraged to bid high and were sometimes disgraced, if they showed a reluctance to enter on this sort of speculation."<sup>6</sup> The *Mamlatdar* had to pay a heavy sum (*rasad*) on his first appointment to a new assignment. But he was at pains to recover his advance with interest and very often made considerable "illicit profits by concealment of receipts, non-payment of pensions and the preparation of false bills and muster rolls". A profitable source of income was the *Sadar Waridpatti*—an extra tax. This levy was intended to cover miscellaneous district expenditure not provided for by the Government. Though unauthorized, this tax was not condemned. Before the introduction of the farming system a large number of *Mamlatdars* received about 1 per cent of the revenue of his district, which amounted to Rs. 5,000/- to Rs. 6,000/- a year. According to Elphinstone a considerable *Mamlatdar* "was reckoned reasonable if his own profit did not exceed 5 per cent on the net revenue".

The administration of a district, having an annual produce below one lakh, was placed under an officer called *Kamvisdar*. His duties and responsibilities were of a most comprehensive character and embraced all possible aspects of affairs. He was "the instrument of the collector, and that it was through him that all the settlements were made and all collections realized; it was from him also that the collector should expect most of his information".<sup>7</sup> The *Kamvisdar's* official emoluments were often fixed at 4 per cent of the revenues of the district in his charge together with certain allowances (i.e. the upkeep of a palanquin). Within his jurisdiction it was his duty to encourage new industries and to inquire into disputes of both civil and criminal nature and appoint a *panchayet* for decision. Religious and social questions were referred to him for inquiry.

Malcolm pointed out that in Malwa each *Kamvisdar* in his different areas appointed subordinate *Kamvisdars* to perform the duties of each separate office. "On his honesty and intelligence the prosperity of the district must greatly depend."<sup>8</sup>

The *Mamlatdar* and the *Kamvisdar* were appointed for short periods but they could get their posts renewed. They assessed the rent for each village in consultation with the *Patil*, and sent a *Shiband* for revenue collection if the *Patil* asked for any. The ample powers which these officers enjoyed gave opportunities for corruption. These offices were hereditary in character.

Besides *Sâr Subhedars*, *Mamlatdars* and *Kamvisdars* there were officials like *Desai*, *Mazumdar*, *Amin*. They were in charge of the administration of the *Parganas*. These offices were hereditary. Each member of the family was competent to discharge his functions. The business of the *Desai* was to "superintend all the *Patils*, to furnish every sort of local information which could assist in settling the revenue and to adjust disputes among villages, especially about land."<sup>9</sup> The country was completely in the hands of the *Desais*, "who considered their possession so permanent that each family partitioned its *parganas* among its members like the *Patils*."<sup>10</sup> Every *Desai* managed the village of his own *bhag* (charge) as he pleased and in general they displaced the old *Patils* and carried on even the interior management of each village by means of their own agents, who were called *Taulkdars*. The *Desai* was the "perfect master of the people without any one to check him." The *Deshmukhs* or *Desais* worked as a check upon the *Mamlatdars*.

The *Mazumdars* kept all the accounts of the *Pargana*. The *Mamlatdars*' accounts were not passed by the Secretariat at Poona, unless corroborated by corresponding accounts from the "local anachronisms", and in all disputes regarding land the *Deshmukh* or *Desai* was expected to produce his ancient records, containing the history of all *watans*, *inams* and grants. But the *Mamlatdar* used to obtain the official approval of his returns by "methods of his own". The second check upon the *Mamlatdar* was put by a staff of hereditary *darakhdars* or office-holders, who were appointed to various provinces of the Maratha dominions. They were directly subordinate to the Peshwa, and reported direct to the Government at Poona. He was to inform the *Kamvisdar* the financial position of the *Pargana*. The *Amin* was formerly a kind of assistant to the *Desais*. Besides these officials, in Sindhia's and Holkar's dominions there was another class of officials, who performed important functions. They were *Chitnavis*, the *Siccanavis*, *Patnavis*, and *Daftardar*.

The *Chitnavis* was the Secretary of State. He carried on all political correspondence, public or confidential, as directed by the ruler. The *Siccanavis* was the keeper of the seal of the ruler, which he affixed to all letters, orders and grants. He kept in his office a register of all such documents. The *Patnavis* was the Treasurer. In his office were kept all accounts of sums received into the State treasury. The *Daftardar* was the keeper of State papers, relative to accounts with receipts and disbursements of the revenue. He was also an Intendant of finance.

There was another class of officials called the *Kulkarnis*. They kept the numerous records and accounts of the village. Some of their important duties were: (1) the general measurement and description of all the village lands, (2) the list of fields, size and quality of each, (3) They had to keep the list of all the inhabitants whether cultivators or others.

In the villages under the revenue department there was a watchman or *Mahar* whose duty was to watch over the boundaries of the village lands and each individual's field. He was to see that they were not encroached upon. He was to give evidence in cases where there were disputes. He was also the public messenger and guide.

According to Malcolm the officers in civil administration in Malwa were Maratha *Brahmins*.<sup>11</sup> But in the Peshwa's dominions there were few *Brahmins* in civil administration, though they held the main lever of the administration.

There was another official called the *Patil*, who was the pivot of the village administration. He was the chief revenue officer, the chief village officer and the chief judicial officer in the village. He served as a link between the village and the suzerain State. As the revenue officer of the village, he was consulted by the *Kamvisdar* at the time of assessment. He had the right to protest if the assessment was too high. As a judicial officer it was the *Patil's* duty to induce the parties in a suit to come to an amicable settlement. If amicable settlement or arbitration failed, he would appoint a *Panchayet*. As a police officer he would seize the criminals, thieves and robbers. His office was hereditary. Under pressure for money he could sell some of his functions to a different branch of his family. When the *Patilship* was enjoyed by several members of the family the elder branch enjoyed additional privileges. His office was "lucrative" and he was "better off than a Deputy Collector under the British administration."<sup>12</sup> The communal duties and wants of the village were performed and supplied by the *bara balute* or twelve hereditary village servants, who received a recognized share of the crops and

other perquisites in return for their services to the community. The personnel of the *bara balute* was not invariably the same in all parts of the Deccan, and in some places they were associated with an additional body of twelve village servants, styled *bara balute*.

In the Southern Maratha country the *jagirdars* had a system of administration of their own. Within their territories they enjoyed powers of life and death. The most important of the *jagirdars* was the *Patwardhan* family. Their custom was that the eldest son should inherit the whole of his father's property. But Bajirao introduced the system of dividing it among all the sons. They were good land holders and administrators. Thomas Munro held a high opinion of the *Patwardhans* as administrators. According to him their lands were well cultivated, they treated the inhabitants with kindness and consideration. They were "deservedly popular".

An analytical study of the institutions would demonstrate that the village institutions enjoyed some powers which were necessary to maintain order and peace within their respective circles. Malcolm observed that the rights and authority of the village institutions had never been contested. As a matter of fact the Maratha villages had a free hand in financial matters. They enjoyed "real self-government within the empire."<sup>13</sup>

*Judicial system:* The judicial administration of the Marathas was not systematic and uniform. There was no codified law. The system was based on custom and old Sanskrit treatises. The administrative officers mainly performed the judicial duties. Malcolm described the system as "imperfect".<sup>14</sup> In Malwa, he wrote, the judicial system was a source of revenue to the rulers.

The rulers were the highest judicial officers in their dominions. In their absence the *Diwan* and the *Phadnavis* used to hear appeals from the lower bodies. At Poona there was an officer called *Ram Shastri*, who was at the head of the administration of justice. Under him there was a special *Nyayadhish* who used to look after civil, criminal and social matters. But in Malwa and the southern Maratha country the rulers did not introduce the system.

The officers like *Mamlatdars* and *Kamvisdars* could decide petty cases, though their duties were not defined. In other matters they were to report the cases to the higher authority. The *Patil* could impose fine and confine any culprit. Besides the ruler himself, only the *Sar Subhedars* could inflict the punishment of death. Elphinstone did not hold a high opinion of the Maratha judicial system. According to him it was "very imperfect"<sup>15</sup> as there was no "certain means of filing a suit" and no "fixed rule of proceeding after it had been

filed.”<sup>16</sup> The disposition of the appellate case depended on the “arbitrary will” of the superior officer. The Government afforded “little justice to the rich” and “none to the poor”. In Nagpur the Raja himself or the *Kamvisdar* administered criminal justice. The *Patils* of the villages had the right to impose small fines.<sup>17</sup> In the southern Maratha country the *jagirdars* as the holders of *Saranjam* lands had the power of life and death. In the southern Maratha country there was a class of judicial officials called *Amildar*, who decided suits of minor nature. Under their superintendence the *panchayets* were placed. They used to accelerate the assembly and decision of the *panchayets*.

*Panchayets*: The *panchayet* system as an instrument of administration of justice came into being during the Peshwa period. Civil justice was chiefly administered by the *panchayets*. The general object of the village *panchayets* was to accommodate matters between the parties. On several occasions criminal cases were referred to the *panchayet* for decision. Malcolm thought that the *panchayets* were resorted to to “find the facts or adjudge the case”.<sup>18</sup> Even in the towns and market places the *Shethi Mahajan* could appoint the *panchayets*. Generally respectable members of the same caste, tradition or position from both of the parties were selected as members of the *panchayets*. If the parties agreed to abide by the decision they had to sign a *Rajinama* or agreement. The *panchayet* was then to proceed with its inquiry, would draw up a *Saransha* or summary of the case and pass its judgment.<sup>19</sup> The judgment had to be confirmed by the *Mamlatdar*. But if the charges of bribery and corruption were proved against a *panchayet*, the case was to be reported to the *Mamlatdar*. The *Mamlatdar* then with the cognizance of the *Patil* would institute another *panchayet*. Malcolm observed that in the southern Maratha country this system was known as *Sir Punnah* or Superior *panchayet*.<sup>20</sup> The decision of the *panchayet* was generally confirmed and upheld by the Government unless there was a charge of corruption against the members of the *panchayet*.

It is interesting to note that a decision arrived at in the absence of either of the parties was not deemed legally valid and the absent party could make an appeal against it. But every care was taken by the relatives of the party to make him appear in the court.

There were court fees during the Peshwa period. The winner had to pay a fee known as *Sherni* or *Harki* which amounted to twenty-five per cent of the disputed property. The *panchayet* had its source of income from a fine called *Gunhagari*.<sup>21</sup> This was imposed on the appellant when he failed to substantiate the charge of corrup-



tion against the *panchayet*. The *Gunhagari* was usually fixed according to the means of the appellant. According to Malcolm the governments in Malwa had a settled fine and fee upon all cases brought before a *panchayet*, which varied according to the nature of the case and wealth of the parties.

The members of the *panchayet* received no fee. But if the case was a protracted one, the winning party on his own free will and pleasure could make a present known as a *Shela* or a *pagota* to the members of the *panchayet*.<sup>22</sup> The trial by *panchayet* was in many respects like the trial by jury. Elphinstone did not hold a high opinion of the Maratha *panchayets*. According to him: "The *panchayets* themselves were open to corruption and to partiality."<sup>23</sup> Malcolm bestowed his appreciation on the system. He remarked: "Punchayets, however defective they become . . . the most just, and efficient of courts that can be used under a native rule."<sup>24</sup> A special feature of the Maratha administration was that the Governments did hardly interfere with the internal management of the village *panchayets*.

*Police:* There was no centralized system of police. The local government officers were the heads of the police in respective areas. The district officer was *Mamlatdar*. In the *Taluks* or *Mahals* the *Amildars* or *Kamvisdars* maintained peace and property of the citizens. In the village the *Patil* was the police officer. Each village had its own watchman—low-caste-men like the *Dhers* or the *Mangs* or tribesmen like the *Ramoshs* or the *Bhils*. They were paid in kind and in some places, they were allotted lands. Besides these, a body of "revenue police" known as *Mahal Shibandi* was attached to their establishment for keeping order in their respective divisions.<sup>25</sup>

There was also a large body of *Shetasanadi*, or soldiers of the soil, who were granted lands for the fulfilment of their ordinary duties.<sup>26</sup> Each group was under the control of its *Naiks*, who were answerable to the *Patil* for any theft or robbery committed in the village. Their duty was to prevent stealing in the village. When a theft or dacoity was committed in a village they were bound as a body to make good the value of the stolen property. Their responsibilities, however, ended with the detection of the offenders or tracing the offence to another village. In the latter period the inhabitants of the place, to which the offence had been traced, were liable to make compensation. When serious dacoities or crimes of serious nature took place, the government strengthened the village police with detachments of *Shibandis* or irregular infantry.

A special police establishment headed by an officer known as *Kotwal* was maintained in cities like Poona, Ahmednagar and also

in some cities of Malwa. He had a large establishment which consisted of mounted and foot police. Besides the police duties, the *Kotwal* had powers to settle trifling disputes and to redress petty grievances. He was the Superintendent of city police as well as the city Magistrate. Under Bajirao II the integrity of the office was not maintained though he appointed a special officer called *Tapasnavis* for general supervision and inspection of the police. It is to be noted that additional police force was posted at holy places in order to maintain peace and order during the festivals and the pilgrimages. S.M. Edwardes observed: "As a class they were shamelessly corrupt, they constantly extorted money by means of false accusations, and were often hand in glove with avowed robbers and outlaws. In the latter respect they were little less culpable than the Maratha *jagirdars* and *Zamindars*, who frequently offered an asylum and protection to fugitive criminals wanted for serious crimes in other districts."<sup>27</sup>

Malcolm was of opinion that in the territories of the Raja of Satara the system was good. In the territories of the *jagirdars* the police system did not work as efficiently as it did in Satara. In Malwa Malcolm pointed out that the system was "a source of profit, not of expenditure to the State."<sup>28</sup> It was their object to make private gains than to do "public good". The office of *Kotwal* was publicly rented. It can be said that the police system was honeycombed with corruption in Malwa. In Nagpur there was a large establishment of *Harkars*, whose duty was to collect information on all subjects. The *Kamvisdars* of the *parganas* and the *Patils* of the village possessed sufficient powers to prevent crimes and apprehend offenders. According to Richard Jenkins the system was not 'properly planned'.<sup>29</sup>

*Revenue Administration:* The revenue administration of the Maratha rulers was based on a policy of securing the prosperity of the tax-payer. It was their policy to induce their subjects to produce more wealth. Malcolm was of opinion that the revenue system of the Marathas was mild and just. The main source of the government's income was from land. Land was the "exclusive" property of the sovereign. The Maratha Governments did not recognize the right of the subject "to sell, mortgage, or otherwise alienate the land."<sup>30</sup> The Demense lands were subdivided into *Sheri* (cultivated fields), *Kurars* (grass lands), *bag* (garden), and *ambarai* (orchards). The lands of the villages under the *Sarkar* was divided into *Nankar*, *Salami* and *Tulput*. The *Nankar* meant rent-free lands. The *Salami* meant a quit-rent, increasing with the prosperity of the field, but no specific share of the produce. The *Tulput* was that which paid a fixed proportion of the produce to the *Sarkar*. The lands of the

district were under the direct management of the district officer like *Kamvisdars*. The lands of the villages were under the supervision of the *Patils*. The lands were generally rented among the officials like *Enamdars*, *Zamindars* and *Jagirdars* who used to sublet the lands to the *ryots*. They held it on different tenures, paid their revenues in different modes and were under different forms of village governments. The *ryot* held his lands on a general understanding that he was not to be dispossessed as long as he paid his rent, which though not fixed was regulated by the custom of the village. It was obligatory on the part of the *ryot* to cultivate the bad lands as the condition of retaining the good land or *vaita*. Additional taxes or cesses were imposed on the *ryots* for possessing best lands. This *vaita* was called in the southern Maratha country *Chalee* or current.<sup>31</sup>

The Maratha rulers displayed their moderation at the time of the assessment of land revenue. The basis on which settlements of revenue were made were founded on the *Jarip* (measurement) agreement. Malcolm highly appreciated the system. Generally twenty-five per cent of the produce was assessed as revenue, in some cases there was forty per cent. This was the direct tax which the *ryots* had to pay. They paid their taxes in cash.

"Besides the land tax there were many taxes known as *Veras*,<sup>32</sup> some bearing on the land, as those of plough, carts, cattle, horses, that (which were) called *Khotevera*."<sup>33</sup> It is to be mentioned here that public officers under the Maratha administration were keen on multiplying the heads of taxation to the utmost possible extent. The selection of heads of taxation and the assessment of taxation made by the farmers and tax collectors made scope for malpractices with which *ryots* made compromise to avoid vexations. These were intended to make up deficiencies. Some taxes were imposed on persons or property, as those on shops, trades, houses, hearths, and that on persons of the military caste, called *Dharallah*. According to Captain Briggs income-tax was levied upon the manufacturers. In his opinion it was "arbitrary" and "undefinable".

There were also extra taxes like cesses and *Abwabs*. The commercial and agricultural classes had to make contributions not only to the State but also to the village communities and even to some criminal tribes whose protection they thought necessary for peaceful avocations. The peasants at the harvest time had to give a certain measure of grains to the village officers including the artisans. When he brought his green vegetables for sale at the market, the *Patil* and the *Kulkarni* (the village scribe) took a handful in pursuance of a very old practice.

There was no uniformity in the imposition of the miscellaneous taxes, which varied from one region to another. Besides these, when a Government officer used to visit or travel in a village the cultivator had to give him presents. Malcolm did not fail to point out the abuses of these extra taxes, which he termed as "oppressive".<sup>34</sup> S. Marriot, the Collector of Northern Konkan, not only criticized it severely but also called it "vexatious". In his despatch to Secretary Warden he remarked: "It was a principle under the Mahratta administration for its numerous public officers to multiply the heads of taxation to the utmost possible extent. They have, accordingly, been brought to include not only the grain crops, but the cattle, the poultry, and even the culinary vegetables raised by the poorest *ryots* in their gardens."<sup>35</sup> On an analysis of Malcolm's and Marriot's observations it becomes clear that the Maratha Government's main share of income was from the indirect taxes. So the condition of the peasants was far from well. They were very poor. Thackeray observed: "Substantial farmers were very rare, and in many villages the *ryots* had not stock sufficient to keep up the usual cultivation."<sup>36</sup> So the *ryots* were exploited. Malcolm pointed out that in Malwa the "favoured classes" escaped those arbitrary taxes.<sup>37</sup>

The Maratha Governments used to grant rent-free lands to *Zamindars*, *Enamdars* and *Watandars* for the services. In the Peshwa's dominions these were known as *Lakheraj* or rent free. In Malwa they were known as *Nankar* lands. In the southern Maratha country these lands were called *Yodi* or Quit rent, and the persons dependent on them known as *Yodi Watans*. Malcolm traced their origin and remarked that it (*Yodi*) was "originally calculated on a principle that allowed the individual fair payment for his services as well as sufficient to support his rank in the community as the district and village officers classes of men who were always deemed the corner-stones of all fiscal arrangements in well-governed native States."<sup>38</sup> The Maratha rulers never allowed the permanent alienation of the revenue. They used to issue temporary grants. In Malwa some Rajput peasants or *Bhil* chiefs were given lands known as *Istamrar grants*. These grants were made at a fixed moderate assessment. This was done only to conciliate and to induce the *Bhils* to cultivate the soil, so that they would be obliged to give protection.

There was another tenure known as *Pusaita*, which was government land, allotted to the various artificers in each village. These lands could not be sold or mortgaged. The *Pusaita* was an official rather than a personal occupancy. In the *Pargana Pusaita* was held by the *Gossains*, *Bairagis*, *Fakirs* and *Brahmins*. In the villages

*Pusaita* was also assigned to *Bhats* and others for cleaning tanks, drawing water for the village cattle and for supplying water to travellers, for temples and mosques.

The Government had a profitable source of income from the *enam* and *jagir* lands. Though these lands were rent free, the revenue was derived from *nazars* on succession to or partition of estates. Their amount appeared to have been "indefinite and discretionary".<sup>39</sup> Bajirao II's annual income from this source was Rs. 1,45,000. Chaplin, "Commissioner to the Deccan," gave a description of the rates of *nazar*. In case of direct inheritance one had to pay half a year's revenue.<sup>40</sup> Where there were cases of indirect inheritance through adoption during life or adoption by a widow, the rates of *nazar* respectively were seventy-five per cent, a hundred per cent and a hundred and twenty-five per cent. Though *nazars* were not taken from *Enamdars* during their tenures of office, the purchaser of an *enam* had to pay one year's revenue. The Government used to exact *nazars* from *Sahukars* and *Mahajans*.

The offices were generally hereditary in character. On the death of the holder an office passed to his successors who on payment of *nazars* held the offices. Chaplin gave a grim picture of this partition. There was no "uniform rule" in dividing among the brothers the estates of "great *enamdars*, *jagirdars* and *zamindars*."<sup>41</sup> According to Hindu law and custom all the sons and grandsons in lineal succession should inherit equal shares of their paternal properties. Chaplin observed that lands "originally granted for reward of services had been permitted to elapse into the condition of private property."<sup>42</sup> He thought that this system lost its original purpose and character. The multiplied sub-division completely defeated the object of the plan. The lands were divided and sub-divided among the members of the family. Though Chaplin severely criticized the system, Malcolm approved of it.

The lands of the Maratha chiefs were usually rented. The renting system was closely connected with their revenue policy. The principal part of the revenues had been farmed to the highest bidders.<sup>43</sup> The Maratha Governments in Malwa rented their lands for a period of ten, twelve, twenty and even thirty years. The long-term renting system induced the holders to take interest in the improvement of the country. In some parts of Daulatrao's dominions there was frequent and even annual change of masters. But in Holkar's dominions the system of long-term lease prevailed. Prendergast in his minute of July 8, 1821, observed: "Under the Marathas districts are farmed by the year or perhaps in some instances longer, to men of influence and affluence about the courts, who are allowed to

remain there and to send a *Gomastah* or agent every year to administer them. The date between the arrival of these men and that for settling the *Jummabundy* (annual settlement) was always too short for them to obtain any knowledge of the resources of the country, and their tenure too precarious for them to have any other object than that of extorting the utmost."

Malcolm wrote that many of the renters were either bankers, or men supported by that class.<sup>44</sup> This gave them a considerable power in the affairs of the State. They had acquired and maintained an influence both in the councils of the State and the local administration of the provinces. Malcolm said: "The richest bankers mixed in the petty revenue details of the smallest village."<sup>45</sup> They used to make advances and provide seeds to the cultivators who could not keep a store of grain. They claimed by usage, in good seasons, fifty per cent in kind. But their claim was liable to deduction on partial failure. They would consider themselves fortunate if their advances were returned in full. There were occasions when they had to sustain entire loss, e.g., when crops were completely destroyed and the peasants were not in a position to pay off the debts. The grain, which the bankers used to offer to the husbandmen, their families and labourers, for their maintenance, was returned in kind during the harvest months. This was done at one and a half but more frequently one and a quarter per seer.

The rent collector, when he assumed charge of a province or district, had a schedule of all the known receipts and disbursements of the country to which he was nominated. These were furnished from the Phadnavis's or Exchequer's office. Certain disbursements were authorized, and the balance of the collections was remitted to the treasury. During the early part of the nineteenth century it had been a custom with the Maratha chiefs in Malwa to demand one year's revenue in advance; and sometimes (if the collectors were rich) two years from those to whom they consigned countries. Of course an interest of one per cent per month was granted upon such advances.<sup>46</sup> The collector, if he had no money, could easily borrow, at this or a lower rate, from bankers. This enabled the bankers to secure an authority upon the cultivators. As a result the cultivators were at their mercy. The bankers held a high position in the councils of the State. "The fact is," remarked Malcolm: "that it is actually the bankers who make these advances direct and receive in payment an assignment on the collections of districts, which they under-rent, and this system was often the effect of placing them at the head, not only of the revenue, but of the councils of the State."<sup>47</sup>

The renting system was not uniform in every part of the Maratha Empire. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century the renting system was an annual affair in Malwa. Malcolm termed it as "dreaded" as it led to the ruin of agriculture and the "general distress" of the peasants. The result of the system also varied from one area to another. Marriott bitterly criticized the system which prevailed in Konkan. He wrote that between the Government and the *ryots* there were several intermediate agents, who used to "obtain a profit from the transaction, sufficient not only to defray their own ordinary expenses, but to repay them for the bribes and presents by which their situation in the farms had been secured. This system, if it deserves that name, was rendered particularly prejudicial by the insecurity of the possession of these farms; for it was a common practice to annul a lease upon the most frivolous pretext, and to give it to another at an enhanced rent. In fact, it was often quite unnecessary to offer any reason for the annulment of a lease."<sup>48</sup> Chalplin, the Commissioner, gave a grim picture of the renting system. According to him it led to the "intestine wars" during Bajirao's reign.<sup>49</sup> He observed:

"Security was always taken from these revenue contractors, unless they happened to be confidential favourites, like Trimbakji and others. These contractors under-rent the privilege of squeezing the districts to other farmers, in several gradations, and the necessary consequence was, that no limits were set to extortion, no provision was made in these contracts for the protection of the *ryots*, and the Patils or hereditary heads of villages were often displaced to make room to persons agreeing to pay a higher revenue. Cesses upon cesses of the most arbitrary nature were collected until the old original field assessments were entirely obliterated."<sup>50</sup>

This led to the general depopulation of districts and the increase of waste land. Elphinstone severely criticized the system. According to him, "No moderation was shewn in levying the sum fixed, and every pretext for fine and forfeiture, every means of rigor and confiscation, were employed to squeeze the utmost out of the people, before the arrival of the day when the Mamlatdar was to give up his charge."

*Trade:* The renting system led to the growth of the markets, shops and towns. The sale of public land was a profitable source of income. One square foot of land cost four or five rupees. The Maratha Governments favoured trade. The interest of the trading class was patronized better than that of the *ryots*. The reason was that the government's income from custom duties was lucrative.

The towns near Poona used to carry on inland trade. The principal articles of manufacture were coarse woollen and cotton

cloths, and in Poona there were silk-weaving looms. They used to manufacture silken saris and dresses ornamented with gold tissue. The traders at Malwa carried on trade and commerce with the big towns of Gujarat, the Deccan, Bundelkhand, Rajputana and Northern India. The principal articles of export from Malwa were grain, cotton, opium, coarse cloths, linseed, etc., and cattle of all descriptions. Its chief imports were salt, spices, drugs, cocoanuts, indigo, betel-nut, pearls, corals etc.

Custom duties levied by the Government were moderate. At the time of collecting duties the Government followed the usage and never departed from the established rates. Duty was collected according to the value of the article. An interesting feature of the trade policy of the Maratha Governments in the Deccan was that "Home Trade" was very moderately taxed. Thackeray observed that it was only when goods were exported to a very great distance that duties at the rate of five per cent were imposed.<sup>51</sup>

Transit duty or *Zakat* was also moderate. The rate varied in proportion to the value of article, the highest was eight rupees. But the officers under the Government unscrupulously exacted money from the traders. As an advocate of "Free Trade" (*Laissez faire*) Malcolm condemned this as "Vexatious".<sup>52</sup> He narrated how a class of officers collected huge sums. Duties were levied upon all animals and goods. But at fords in rivers and at the borders of the provinces and districts the foot passengers had to pay large or small customs. Malcolm observed that they cheated the Government's income on this source. He remarked: "This (custom duty) the merchants often avoid by having recourse to a class of persons who contract for a certain sum, not only to convey their goods but to pay all duties to any given place they desire. These persons derive considerable gain from such concerns: partly by fair means but more by collusion with the officers in charge of the custom department."<sup>53</sup> Not only in Malwa but also in the Deccan the custom officers used to derive a large income in this way. Malcolm observed: "There is no branch of their revenue in which the Mahratta Governments are more wronged than that of customs,"<sup>54</sup> as the ministers, managers, *Amildars* had opportunities of making fortunes. Elphinstone also observed: "To remedy this inconvenience (transit duty) there was a class called *Hoondeekurrees* in towns, who undertook for a single payment to pass articles throughout the whole country. These men arranged with the farmers of the customs, and were answerable to them for the sums due. In addition to the transit there was a tax of twelve per cent on the sale of animals included in the *Zakat*."<sup>55</sup>



In those days roads were not safe. The merchandise was frequently plundered by robbers. The *Sahukars* or brokers worked like the Insurance Companies. They had parties of armed men, who formed connections with ministers and commanders of armies. Moreover they had engagements with plundering chieftains and robbers and had their goods guarded like the baggage of an army. The *Sahukars* at Ujjain, Indore and Mandasore kept small corps, which were supported by the high premiums on all articles that were exported or imported between Malwa, Gujarat, the Deccan and Hindustan. They had to bribe the most powerful plunderers of the day for the safe convoy of the goods. Articles like grain, salt, wood and cattle were never insured. But valuable articles like opium, bullion, and jewels were insured. These brokers not only insured against risk and would take upon themselves the carriage, but also contracted to pay all duties.

*Population:* In Malwa, Sindhia and Holkar employed the Maratha peasantry in the military services at the early stage. Malcolm termed them as the *Sudras*.<sup>56</sup> In the later part of the eighteenth century these Maratha *Sudras* were outnumbered by the *Hindustanis*, whose services were preferred by Sindhia and Holkar. In the early part of the nineteenth century there were five thousand Maratha *Sudras* in the military services of Sindhia and Holkar. It was a characteristic of the Marathas that they always kept a close tie with their homeland. Malcolm observed: "The Maratha citizens, as well as the military of that nation, preserve, like the Brahmins, their love of the Deccan. . ."<sup>57</sup>

Malcolm made some casual observations about Maratha women. According to him they played a significant role in the social as well as political affairs of the State. The women who were married to men of rank enjoyed more privileges and liberty than women of lower rank. These influential ladies used to give feasts and entertainments to their friends on birth days and marriages and on a particular anniversary. They were free in their movements and seldom wore a veil. They used to spend much money on jewels and clothes.<sup>58</sup>

The Maratha ladies had considerable influence in the secret councils. They enjoyed to some extent a share in the Government, and in some cases they had been recognized as influential counsellors. They were given training in reading, writing and arithmetic. The management of the horse always constituted a part of their education. They were required to keep a register of horses. Though Maratha ladies of high order in general were deficient in beauty, they were highly intelligent. Their husbands used to take their counsel in secret matters of the State. Both *Sudra* and *Brahmin* ladies were remark-

able for their religious devotion. On religious occasions and festivals they observed austerities.

Malcolm did not fail to point out the baneful effect of camp life on the morals of the Maratha women. The women used to accompany their husbands in the battlefield. In a camp their husbands indulged in various vices. These vices also made occasional inroads on the women of high order. "The courts of Holkar and Sindhia have," observed Malcolm, "for the last twenty-five years, been exceedingly profligate."<sup>59</sup>

Generally the women of higher officers suffered from the vices. Malcolm remarked that some examples of "shameless licentiousness" were found among the ladies of higher classes.<sup>60</sup> Elphinstone also had the same opinion about the upper classes. According to him, "... adulteration and prostitution are common in upper classes, ... Drunkenness, the peculiar vice of the lower order, is almost unknown in the Maratha country, which has thence a decided superiority in morals over the old provinces."<sup>61</sup> According to Malcolm the wives of the poor Marathas were mostly free from the vices. These women had the reputation of being faithful wives and good mothers. They used to share the toils of their husbands. These women were the faithful companions of their husbands in time of dangers and happiness.

## Notes and References

1. Gune, V.T., *The Judicial System of the Marathas* p. 40; Also Malcolm, Sir John, *Report on Malwa and Adjoining Countries*, p 362.
2. Ballhatchet, Kenneth, *Social Policy and Social Change in Western India*, 1817-1830, p. 9.
3. Gune, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
4. *Narrative of the Inam Commission*, p. 10.
5. Gune: *op. cit.*, p. 41. The Deputy who had the power to affix the seal of his superior was called his *Mutaliq* and the seal which he was authorized to use was known as the *Mutalaqi Shiqqa*.
6. Forrest, *Official Writings of Mount Stuart Elphinstone*, pp. 287-89.
7. S.R. Vol. III, p. 681; Minute by the President, April 6, 1821.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. S.R., Vol. III, p. 698; Minute by the President, May 6, 1821.
11. Malcolm, *Report on Malwa and Adjoining Countries*, p. 361.
12. Sen, S.N., *Administrative System of the Marathas*, p. 224.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 240.
14. For. Misc. Serial No. 204, 1829; Minute of Sir John Malcolm on the revenue and judicial administration on the southern Marhatta country.
15. Elphinstone, *Report on Territories Conquered from the Paishwa*, p. 84.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Jenkins, Richard, *Report on the Territories of Nagpur*, p. 268.
18. For. Misc. Serial No. 204, 1829.
19. *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar*, Vol. 45; Letter No. 48.
20. For. Misc. Serial No. 204, 1829.
21. For. Pol. Procs. July 7, 1821; John Malcolm to the Governor-General, 1821.
22. *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar*, Vol. 45; Letter No. 48.
23. Elphinstone, *Report on Territories Conquered from the Paishwa*, p. 85.
24. For. Misc. Serial No. 204, 1829.
25. S.R. and P.D. VI, No. 805.
26. For. Misc. Serial No. 204, 1829.
27. Dodwell, H.H., *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. V; p. 393.

28. Malcolm, *Report on Malwa and Adjoining Countries*, p. 381.
29. Jenkins, *Report on The Territories of Nagpur*, p. 270.
30. S.R. Vol. III, p. 767; Extract Revenue letter from Bombay, April 19, 1822.
31. For. Misc. No. 204, 1829; Appendix No. 1, Memorandum by Stevenson.
32. S.R. Vol. III, p. 679; Minute by the President, April 6, 1821.
33. *Ibid.*
34. For. Pol. Procs. July 7, 1821; John Malcolm to the Governor-General, 1821.
35. S.R. Vol. III, p. 771; Extract Revenue letter to Bombay, February 13, 1822.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 791; Extract Revenue letter from Bombay to the Court, November 27, 1822.
37. Malcolm, Sir John, *Report on Malwa and Adjoining Countries*, p. 448. Favoured classes in Malwa were Brahmins and Ministers, etc.
38. S.R. Vol. III, p. 649.
39. S.R. Vol. III, p. 649; Extract Revenue letter from Bombay to the Court, November 27, 1822.
40. S.R. Vol. III, p. 815; Extract Revenue letter from Bombay to the Court, November 27, 1822.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 816.
42. S.R. Vol. III, p. 817; Extract Revenue letter from Bombay to the Court, November 27, 1822.
43. Ballhatchet, *op. cit.*, p. 308.
44. For. Pol. Procs. July 7, 1821; John Malcolm to the Governor-General, 1821.
45. *Ibid.*
46. Malcolm, *Malwa and Adjoining Countries*, p. 449.
47. For. Pol. Procs. July 7, 1821; John Malcolm to the Governor-General, 1821.
48. S.R. Vol. III, p. 786; Extract from Revenue collections (S. Marriott to Secretary Warden).
49. For. Misc. No. 204, 1829.
50. *Ibid.*
51. S.R. Vol. III, p. 792.
52. Malcolm, *Report on Malwa and Adjoining Countries*, p. 491.
53. S.R. Vol. III, p. 792; Extract Revenue letter from Bombay, November 27, 1822.
54. Malcolm, *Report on Malwa and Adjoining Countries*, p. 487.
55. Elphinstone, *Report on Territories Conquered from the Paishwa*, p. 39.
56. For. Pol. Procs. July 7, 1821; John Malcolm to the Governor-General, 1821.
57. *Ibid.*
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59. *Ibid.*
60. *Ibid.*
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## Conclusion

ALTHOUGH the policies of the East India Company in India were formally determined by the Court of Directors and the Board of Control, the men on the spot actually shaped them in most cases. This was inevitable in an age of difficult communications; the authorities in London could not keep the threads of Indian policies in their own hands because unforeseen political developments might push their servants into unforeseen courses of action. The Governors-General assumed a large measure of personal responsibility; but as their sphere of activities became larger and provoked new complications they had to depend more and more upon their subordinates and allow the more capable among them to take an active part in the formulation of policies. This is illustrated in the careers of men like Malcolm, Metcalfe and Elphinstone. They contributed to empire-building much more than mere faithful and efficient execution of instructions. The real significance of Malcolm's role in Maratha affairs lies in the fact that, although imperialists like Lord Wellesley and Lord Moira extended the empire by war and diplomacy, the sound common sense, local knowledge and practical wisdom exhibited by soldiers, diplomats and administrators serving under them made their job easier. The role of Malcolm in the cross-currents of Maratha affairs brings out the latent qualities of such able servants of the Company.

Immediately on his arrival in India as Governor-General, Lord Wellesley decided to abandon the policy of non-interference followed by his predecessor and favoured by his superiors in London; his purpose was to play a positive role in Indian affairs. Temperamentally an imperialist, he found in the French menace an incentive to bold action and aimed at converting the British Empire *in* India into the British Empire *of* India. He found a convenient political instrument in the policy of subordinate alliance which his predecessors had applied with profit to Oudh and the Carnatic. He developed it into a full-fledged political-cum-military system which is known to history as the Subsidiary Alliance. But with the characteristic instinct and ingenuity of the British statesman, he had to weigh with precision the practicability of the application of the system to the

Indian body-politic. While Wellesley was trying to understand the potentiality of the Indian States, their strength and weakness, Malcolm presented him with some important papers on Indian States which would be helpful in the formulation of his policy. This was a unique service rendered to the new Governor-General by a junior officer who had already begun to look beyond routine duties and to think of great problems. Lord Wellesley appreciated the service and rewarded him with the post of an assistant to the Resident at Hyderabad. He was called "Wellesley's factotum and the greatest man in Calcutta".<sup>1</sup>

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century political conditions were largely fluid except in the north-west, where a Sikh monarchy was being organized by Ranjit Singh. The "country powers" were visibly disintegrating. The political vacuum was becoming larger, and it was Wellesley's aim to get it filled up by the British power. But diplomacy, however subtle, could hardly bring even limited success if it was not backed by armed force. The "country powers" accepted subordination only when they were overawed by military superiority. The Nizam succumbed to British control after Khairatpur. Tipu, instead of succumbing, sacrificed his life. The Peshwa succumbed only when the Holkar-Sindhia contest forced him to quit his own capital. Diplomacy, however, was an essential complement to military developments; it had to be used with tact and foresight to gather the fruits falling from the shaken tree.

In such a situation success was certain to favour officers who combined military with diplomatic gifts. Malcolm belonged to this category, although he was greater as a diplomat than as a soldier. From his early years it was evident that he was capable of using his head and hand together. Though he could not play a very effective role in the war against Sindhia and Bhonsle in 1803-04 owing to his illness, in the concluding stage of the war we can discern his incomparable gift as a diplomat. The peace treaty with Daulatrao Sindhia on February 27, 1804, was largely the handiwork of Malcolm. In the course of negotiations he displayed his practical common-sense and statesmanship. He made some changes in the original treaty and succeeded in inducing Daulatrao to sign a defensive treaty. His services were recognized by the Governor-General as also by Arthur Wellesley.<sup>2</sup>

After the conclusion of the treaty there were differences between Malcolm and the Governor-General on the question of the restoration of Gwalior and Gohad to Sindhia. It was too bold for a

junior officer to put himself against the impervious Governor-General; he was snubbed and his future career appeared to be in jeopardy. But the incident is significant in so far as it reveals the maturity of Malcolm's ideas on British relations with the "country powers". With his deep political insight he championed what appeared to be the cause of Sindhia; he calculated that if the British Government conceded these two strategic points to the aggrieved Maratha chief, the East India Company would find in him a friend who would have no serious grievance to nourish and whose cooperation in future crises could be counted upon. Had the Governor-General restored those places to Daulatrao, the latter would most probably have thought twice before joining Yashwantrao after his victory at the battle of Mukundara pass. Even Lord Wellesley admitted later that the retention of Gwalior and the treaty with the Rana of Gohad did not give him the expected result. At the time, however, the Governor-General was interested primarily in curbing Sindhia's power; he was afraid that the restoration of Gwalior and Gohad would consolidate again Sindhia's position in Hindustan. If we weigh the arguments of Malcolm and the counter-arguments of the Governor-General, two things become clear. In the first place, Malcolm's stand was justified from a long-term view of political affairs. A friendly Sindhia would be able to keep in check the wild forces of chaos and confusion reigning in the outlying regions of Sindhia's territories. In the second place, Malcolm took a somewhat idealistic view of the prevailing political conditions in the then India. He expected Sindhia to behave as he should behave, not as he was likely to behave.

The difference in Malcolm's attitude towards Daulatrao Sindhia and Yashwantrao Holkar deserves notice in this connection. If he was soft with Sindhia he was unusually harsh with Holkar. The reason was that he did not come into direct contact with Holkar. Another reason may be that Malcolm did not like the restless and dominating personality of Yashwantrao who plunged himself headlong in the war against the British when they had just emerged victorious against Sindhia and Bhonsle. It may also be suggested that the opportunistic policy of Yashwantrao Holkar—who kept himself aloof from Sindhia and Bhonsle and then took single-handed action—was not liked by Malcolm. That was why, when Holkar at last was compelled to sign the treaty of peace with the British Government, Malcolm was not willing to grant him liberal terms. But the Governor-General, despite Malcolm's loud protests, gave Holkar easy terms and recognized both Holkar's and Sindhia's

rights of protectorate over the Rajput States, which had long proved to be a happy hunting ground of the Maratha fortune-makers. From the political point of view, Barlow's concession to these two Maratha States opened the flood-gate of confusion in Rajasthan. The Marathas had no interest in the well-being of the tottering Rajput States; they were determined to exploit them, to squeeze gold out of hill and desert. While demanding tribute from the Rajput princes both Sindhia and Holkar remained silent spectators of the ravages and inroads of the Pindaris. The tragedy of Krishnakumari was the symbol of the suffering and humiliation of Rajasthan under the dual pressure of the Marathas and the Pindaris. The Rajput princes would have suffered less, and the Pindaris would have been less bold, if Barlow had paid attention to the advice of this matured and seasoned soldier-diplomat who by that time felt the pulse of Central India much better than any other British officer. But Barlow's hands were tied by dictation from London, and Malcolm was looking back to the Wellesley policy which had been repudiated.

In the first decade of the nineteenth century the Pindari menace burst forth in uncontrolled fury over a large part of the Indian sub-continent. This was to a large extent due to the weakness of the Maratha States. The situation became worse when Yashwantrao Holkar sank into insanity, and disorder gripped the Holkar State. Malcolm compared the Pindaris to "masses of putrefaction in animal matter, out of the corruption of (growing) weak and expiring States." Closely linked with them were the parallel bands of Pathans whose leading chief, Amir Khan, seized control over the Holkar State and terrorized the Rajput principalities. It was but natural that such a threat to political stability and security of life, and property would draw the attention of the Governors-General in India. Lord Moira rightly decided to exterminate these wild law-breakers and to restore peace and order in Central India. John Malcolm's service was called for and readily extended. Historians have not paid enough attention to the part played by him in the extirpation of the marauders.

Having begun his Indian career in the military service, Malcolm had so far little opportunity to prove his mettle as a warrior; the Pindari war called forth his professional skill. He was appointed Commander of the third division of the southern forces. More important than his military task were the political responsibilities with which he was saddled as Political Agent to the Governor-General.<sup>3</sup> Lord Moira utilized to the full the military and diplomatic services of Malcolm in administering the final blow at the predatory hordes. Malcolm not only executed the policy determined by the



Governor-General, he directly contributed to its making. He presented a memorandum to the Governor-General suggesting that the best way to destroy the Pindaris was to isolate them from the main body of the Marathas.<sup>4</sup> He suggested that strong measures should be adopted against Sindhia, Holkar and other chiefs who were the patrons of the Pindaris. He requested the Governor-General to demand from Sindhia the surrender of the fort of Asirgarh for a period of three to five years, as also of the town and district of Burhanpore.<sup>5</sup> He further advised the Governor-General to demand from Sindhia the services of some horsemen. It was on the basis of these suggestions that the Governor-General forced Daulatrao Sindhia to sign the Treaty of Gwalior on November 5, 1817.<sup>6</sup> This treaty strengthened the East India Company and made the military operations against the Pindaris easier and more effective.

Regarding Malharrao Holkar, Malcolm suggested that the services of Amir Khan should be employed for negotiations as Amir Khan had considerable hold over Holkar's court. His plan was to take possession of Tonk and Rampura or one or two fortresses in Khandesh so that these strategic places would provide a good base for carrying on military operations. But these suggestions were not accepted and no definite treaty could be formulated. However, an important item in Malcolm's policy of isolating the Pindaris was translated into action when the Governor-General concluded a treaty with Amir Khan on November 15, 1817. Malcolm cast his net wide. In his capacity as the Governor-General's Political Agent he succeeded in securing the aid of the Nizam and the Raja of Mysore against the Pindaris.<sup>7</sup> The results of the Pindari war showed that Malcolm's suggestion for segregating Sindhia and Holkar from the Pindaris proved beneficial to the British as it broke their power of resistance and ultimately annihilated them.

But it was in the vicissitudes of the third Anglo-Maratha war that Malcolm's practical common sense, diplomatic ability and political foresight revealed his maturity despite occasional lapses on his part. One significant lapse was his failure to grasp the subtleties of Bajirao's character. His attitude towards Bajirao was not consistent. When the Peshwa concluded the Treaty of Bassein on December 31, 1802, with the East India Company, Malcolm was doubtful about the benefits to be derived from this treaty. He knew well that Bajirao was weak, vacillating and intriguing: he suspected that the Peshwa would not hesitate to violate the terms of the treaty when he would get an opportunity.<sup>8</sup> But his attitude towards Bajirao underwent a considerable change when he visited the

Peshwa at Mahuli<sup>9</sup> Malcolm pleaded to Elphinstone for the relaxation of the hard terms which were imposed on Bajirao by the Treaty of Poona. He sought the Peshwa's help in the destruction of the Pindaris and advocated an increase in the strength of Bajirao's army. It is strange indeed that with all his experience of political vicissitudes he should have put his trust in the words of the discredited, vacillating Peshwa. On this occasion he betrayed a lack of shrewdness which is an essential quality of a diplomat. The offspring of Raghunathrao and Anandi Bai was not a fit and proper person to whom a policy of moderation and refinement could be applied consistently with the interest of the Company.

His role in the final submission of Bajirao demonstrated the fact that he possessed a strong practical common sense. He knew well that Bajirao could be defeated, but the Peshwa's delay in submission would complicate the situation. It would be a long drawn and protracted war. At the same time it would be a costly affair. So he granted a sum of eight lakhs as pension to Bajirao. With Bajirao's acceptance of the pension the third Anglo-Maratha war came to an end. So he rendered an invaluable service to his country. He revealed his political wisdom in following a liberal policy towards the fallen Peshwa; he wanted to assuage his wounded pride and to efface the bitter memories of humiliation. This policy of conciliation advocated by Malcolm would enable the British to earn the gratitude of the Marathas who had respect for the British sense of justice. The Governor-General did not support Malcolm, as Lord Hastings thought that this huge sum would encourage the ex-Peshwa to form new conspiracies from his new abode against the British Government. But Malcolm was supported by the Court of Directors and they congratulated him for bringing about the submission of Bajirao. The Governor-General also admitted in his later despatch to the Court that nothing untoward had taken place as a result of Malcolm's grant of a generous pension to Bajirao. Results, therefore, justified the policy of liberality.

Malcolm's relations with the Holkar State during the years 1817-18 were marked by a combination of bad generalship with penetrating political insight. He tried his level best to avoid war with the Holkar State. He failed because the war-mongers at the Holkar's court were determined to champion the cause of the Pindaris and the Peshwa. When war broke out Malcolm was entrusted with the command. The British victory at Mahitpur was no compliment to his talents as a commander. He did not follow the rules of warfare; if the British soldiers won the battle they had little to thank their

general for. But in making the treaty he was his old self again. He displayed his generosity and gained favourable terms for the East India Company. His service received the approbation of the Governor-General.<sup>10</sup>

Soon after the war Malcolm was entrusted with the delicate task of restoring peace and order in Holkar's dominions, as they were the hunting ground of "active disturbers". Within a short time he succeeded in establishing peace and order. Prosperity returned to Holkar's territory.

In his relation with the Nagpur State Malcolm displayed his usual moderation. He asked Appasaheb to surrender and accept a pension of one lakh of rupees for his maintenance. But the Maratha prince chose a different path and lost himself in the wilderness.

Malcolm's dealings with the Maratha power reveal a constructive aspect of British empire-building in India. The needs of the time called for the application of force for the achievement of political objectives; but Malcolm believed more in the efficacy of diplomacy than in the use of arms. His views were out of tune with those of fire-eating empire-builders. He was a politician of the school of moderates. He took a balanced stand in adjusting to the Company's interests the progressive desintegration of the Maratha States. He did much to mitigate the harshness of British policy. From the year 1798, through the unceasing convulsions and confusions of two decades, he pursued the same line, not only in the sphere of diplomacy but also in the more humble but no less important sphere of administration. He left a legacy for his juniors. "From Malcolm's example", we are told, "his young assistant Outram learned how to pacify Central India by training the savage tribe of *Bhils*."<sup>11</sup> But to his utter chagrin he found in later years that tides were against him. In 1828 he confessed sorrowfully: "I fear my views of governing this country are too opposed to the pride of conquerors and the general plans of cold calculators to be much approved."<sup>12</sup>

## Appendix A

### IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES

- Adam, John** : entered as a writer in the East India Company's service; reached Calcutta in February 1796 and was head assistant in the judicial revenue Secretariat. In 1802 he was the head of the Governor-General's office. In 1804, he became Deputy Secretary in the Secret and Political Department; in 1809 Secretary in the military department. In 1812 he was appointed Secretary to the Secret Foreign and Political Departments. He became the Private Secretary in 1817 to the Governor-General and was appointed Political Secretary to the Marquis of Hastings whom he accompanied during the Maratha and Pindari wars. He became later on member of the Supreme Council.
- Close, Barry** : was appointed to the Madras Army, was present at the sieges of Seringapattam in 1792 and 1799 as Deputy and Assistant Adjutant-General. In 1799, he was appointed Resident of Mysore; in 1801, appointed Resident at Poona and stayed there for ten years.
- Collins, John** : joined the East India Company's Bengal infantry in 1790. In 1795 he was appointed Resident at the court of Daulatrao Sindhia. In 1803 left Sindhia's court. After the Second Anglo-Maratha war he was appointed Resident at the court of Lucknow.
- Edmonstone, Neil Benjamin** : entered the covenanted (civil) service in 1783. He was the Private Secretary to the acting Governor-General Sir Alfred Clarke in April 1798; and Sir G.H. Barlow in February 1807. He was appointed Secretary in 1801 to the Supreme Government in the Foreign Department. He became the Chief Secretary to the Supreme Government in 1809. He became the member of the Supreme Council on October 30, 1811, and retained it up to January 17, 1818.

- Elphinstone, : entered as writer in East India Company's service  
Mountstuart in 1795. In 1801 he was appointed Assistant to Sir Barry Close, the Resident of Poona. At the battles of Assai and Adgaum he was on the staff of Lt. Colonel Arthur Wellesley. He was Resident at Nagpur from 1804 to 1808. He was sent to Kabul as envoy. In 1811 he became the Resident of Poona. He was the Governor of Bombay from November 1819 to November 1827.
- Jenkins, : in 1800 entered the Company's service. In 1804 he  
Richard became Assistant to the Political Department at Poona and Assistant Resident at Sindhia's court. In 1807 he was appointed Acting Resident at Nagpur and became the Resident at Nagpur from 1810 to 1827.
- Kennaway, : entered the Company's military service in 1772. In  
Sir John 1781 he was Persian Secretary to Colonel T.D. Pearse commanding the force sent from Bengal to the Carnatic. He also served under Sir Eyre Coote against Haidar. In 1790 he was sent to make a treaty with the Nizam. In 1792 he concluded the Treaty of Seringapattam with Tipu. He was the first Resident at Hyderabad from April 28, 1788.
- Webbe, Joseah : appointed a writer at Fort St. George, Madras, 1783, Secretary to the Board of Revenue, 1797. He became the first Secretary in 1800, appointed Resident at Mysore in 1804 and Resident at Sindhia's court in May 1804.

# Appendix B

## GLOSSARY

- Abwabs** : Head of subjects of taxation or the taxes which were imposed under the Muhammedan Governments in addition to the regular assessment on the Land. Miscellaneous cesses, imposts and charges, levied by the Zamindars and public officers.
- Diwali** This festival is celebrated with great eclat all over India by the Hindus, Buddhists and Jainas on the night of the new moon in the month of Kartika. Candles are lighted in temples and dwelling houses. It reminds the slaying of the demom *Naraka* by Krishna and so it is known as *Naraka Chaturdasi*. During the daytime the Sradha Ceremony of the dead ancestors is performed by the Hindus and in the evening candles are lighted to show the path to the dead ancestors, who come to receive the offerings given by their descendants. The Bengalee Hindus worship the Goddess Kali in this night. So it is known as *Dipavita Kalipuja*. But this practice is not mentioned in the *Puranic* works. In the same evening the Goddess Lakshmi is also worshipped. On this day Lord Buddha left his home. The Buddhists celebrate the day by lighting candles. Mahavira Tirthankara passed away on this day and the Jainas also observe the day by lighting candles.
- Enam** : Among the Marathas, the term was specially applied to grants of land held rent-free, and in hereditary and perpetual occupation; the tenure came in time to be qualified by the reservation of a portion of the assessable revenue or by the exaction of all proceeds exceeding the intended value of the original assignment, the term was also applied to grants of rent-free land without reference to perpetuity or any specified conditions.
- Gunhegari** : Offence, crime, fine, punishment by fine. Revenue derived from judicial fines.
- Huzuriahs** : were personal attendants of the Maratha chiefs in

Malwa. They belonged to their master's tribe and were usually of respectable parentage. It is said that a great proportion were hereditary followers of the family of the chief they served. They were the usual envoys to subjects on occasions of importance. Their appearance superseded all other authority and disobedience to the orders they conveyed, was termed as an act of rebellion.

**Istamrar Grants** : A farm or lease granted in perpetuity by Government or a Zamindar, at a stipulated rent and exempt from abwabs, such a lease granted in charity at a quit rent.

**Jagirdars** : Taking or occupying a place or position. A tenure common under the Muhammedan government, in which the public revenues of a given tract of land were made over to a servant of the State, together with the powers requisite to enable him to collect and appropriate such revenue and administer the general government of the district. In the Maratha dominion the jagir grants were of three classes: (1) those held by descendants of the original ministers of the Rajas, as the Pratinidhi and the Pradhans, prior to the usurpation of the Peshwa; (2) those held by military chiefs, on condition of service, some of whom have held their fiefs from the time of the Muhammedan monarchies; and (3) those held under grants from the Peshwas, generally Brahmins or Marathas of low family.

**Khas tahsil** : Collection of the revenue direct from the cultivators by the government, without the intervention of a Zamindar or farmer of the revenue.

**Khas Saranjam lands** : Among the Marathas it was applied especially to a temporary assignment of revenue from villages or lands for the support of troops or for personal military service usually for the life of the grantee; also to grants made to persons appointed to civil offices of the State to enable them to maintain their dignity and to grants for charitable purposes. These were neither transferable nor hereditary and were held at the pleasure of the sovereign.

**Mutalaqi Shiqqa** : It was applied, under the Peshwa's government, to the deputy of any person holding a hereditary office, acting for him in his absence and allowed to use his seal; the deputy or agent of a Deshpande.

- Nazars** : A present, an offering, especially one from an inferior to a superior, to a holy man, or to a prince; a present in general, a fine or fee paid to the State or to its representatives, on succeeding to office or property; a son succeeding to a father's property was not liable to this fine among the Marathas unless he was a jagirdar.
- Sahukars** : A banker, a dealer in money and exchanges, a  
(Showkar) merchant in general.
- Sheri** : Arable land originally excluded from the village assessment, either as fallen in consequence of neglect of cultivation or forfeiture into the hands of the government, and managed for its benefit, or such land separated under some pretext by the great officers of the State, and managed for their own advantage alone, when the Seri lands were appropriated by the Government. They were sometimes rented to Mamlatdars at a favourable rate, latterly they were made over to the Patils and assessed along with the other hands of the village, from which they then ceased to differ, except in retaining their original appellations.
- Vaita** : Land of a superior quality and most highly assessed.
- Veera** : Tax, impost, duty and tax or cess levied in addition to that on land, as upon trades, professions, goods and the like; a particular tax levied upon the land, or upon ploughs, in addition to the standard assessment.
- Watandar** : The holder of a hereditary right, property or office with the privileges and emoluments attached to it.
- Zamindar** : "Land-holder"; under the Mughals, a term applied loosely to the possessor of a variety of interests in land, as hereditary chief. His duty was to pay revenue from a specified area to the "State" or someone who had purchased that right or had been introduced by the "State" as its revenue agent. Such a Zamindar would normally receive for his pains a percentage of the revenue collected and a grant of revenue free land, but would not enjoy rights of ownership in the soil of the area for which he was a revenue collecting agent. He could, however, be the landlord of his self-cultivated holding and let it out to the tenants.



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## Index

- Abdulla Khan, 141  
*Abwabs*, 160  
 Adam, John, 114, 132, 140  
 Adams, 102-03, 112, 131, 148  
 Adgaum, 35  
 Afghan, 2, 78  
     — Monarch, 79  
     — Ruler, 80  
 Aglave, 16  
 Agra, 36, 67-8, 71  
 Agnew (Colonel), 121  
 Ahalyabai, 17  
 Ahmednagar, 20, 31-2, 34, 73, 158  
 Ajanta hills, 36  
 Ajmer, 65, 77  
 Aligarh, 35  
 Allahabad, 139  
 Allied States, 39  
 Ambaji Ingle, 22, 45-6, 48-50, 55-6, 70, 76  
 Ambar, 82  
*Amildars*, 49, 57, 157-58, 165  
*Amin*, 154  
 Amir Khan, 6, 19-20, 28, 77, 98, 100-01, 110, 126-30, 133, 173-74  
 Amritrao, 18, 34, 120, 140  
 Amritsar, 79  
 Anandi Bai, 175  
 Anandrao, 6  
 Anandrao Biswanath, 113  
 Anandrao Gaikwad, 36  
 Anandrao Pawar, 17  
 Anandrao Yashwant, 113, 116  
 Anglo-French Hostility, 12  
 Anglo-Maratha War  
     —, first, 34, 44, 92  
     —, second, 3, 34, 93  
     —, third, 34, 44, 92, 150, 174-75  
 Anglo-Mysore War  
     —, second, 10\*  
     —, third, 12  
     —, fourth, 1  
 Appa Desai, 27-31, 35, 112-13, 117  
 Appa Saheb (Patwardhan), 27-8, 31, 98, 104, 137-49, 176  
 Arab, 116, 134, 139, 141  
     —, infantry, 111  
     —, mutineers, 117  
 Arome, 94  
 Asirgarh, 35, 73, 99-100, 104, 110, 113, 118-19, 121-22, 130, 141, 144-50  
 Asheer, 120  
 Ashta, 102, 112  
 Assai, 65  
 Aur, 133  
 Aurangabad, 33-5  
 Aurangzeb, 92  
 Azim-ul-Umrah, 15  
 Baba Phadke, 15  
 Bag, 159  
 Badnawar, 67  
 Bahadurkhan, 93-4  
 Baille, 45  
 Bails, 5  
 Baka Bai, 137-38  
 Balajirao Gopal, 27  
 Baji Rao I, 44, 92

- Bajwara, 79  
 Balakrishna Gangadhar, 27  
 Balaram Seth, 80-1, 128  
 Balapore, 35  
 Baloji Kunjar, 17-8, 20, 23  
 Bandere, 47  
 Bapu Chitnavese, 48  
 Bapu Gokhale III, 108, 111-12  
 Bapu Gokhale, 18, 27-8, 31  
 Bapu Vithal Pant, 16, 27-8, 36,  
     46, 48, 53, 57; 59, 68.  
*Bakshi* Sadashiv Bhaskar, 20  
 Banswara, 6  
 Baonee, 47  
*Bara balute*, 155-56  
 Baramati, 20, 27  
 Baramahal, 12  
 Bari, 36, 72, 74-5  
 Barlow, Sir George, 4, 75, 78, 82-5,  
     90, 173  
 Baroda, 14  
 Bassein, 22  
 Baticalnallah, 148  
 Battle of Assai, 35  
     —, Bhima, 112  
     —, Kharda, 11, 13, 92  
     —, Mahitpur, 5, 132-34  
     —, Panipat third, 44, 92  
     —, Yerveda, 112  
 Bay of Bengal, 14  
 Beas, 79  
 Begum Samru, 45  
 Belgaum, 27  
 Benares, 115  
 Bengal, 75  
     —, Corps, 147  
 Berar, 30-1, 95  
 Berasia, 101  
 Betwa Fort, 127  
*Bhag*, 154  
 Bhag Singh, 80  
 Bhao Bhaskar, 79, 128  
 Bharmal Holkar, 80  
 Bharatpur, 59, 68, 71, 127  
*Bhaugaon*, 82  
*Bheena Wallah*, 91  
 Bhi Kaji Nana, 118  
 Bhind, 47  
*Bhils*, 104, 135, 145, 156, 161, 176  
 Bhilsa, 69  
 Bhopal, 128, 138  
 Bhore-Ghat, 2, 29  
 Bhudwar, 47  
 Bihar, 75  
 Bijapur, 91  
 Bomasa, 94  
 Bombay, 2, 3, 21, 22, 37  
     —, Government, 22  
     —, Governor, 21-2  
 Borthwick (Captain), 132  
 Brahmins, 155, 161, 166  
 Brahmin Killedar, 34  
 Briggs (Captain), 118, 160  
 Brown (Major-General), 108, 111,  
     134  
 British Empire *in* India, 176  
     —, *of* India, 176  
 Buiragis, 161  
 Bundelkhand, 64, 76, 80, 127,  
     138, 165  
 Bundi, 66, 82, 129  
 Buran, 93  
 Burr (Colonel), 111-12  
 Burhanpur, 3, 30, 34-7, 73, 100,  
     119, 138, 141, 147, 174  
 Burton (Colonel), 117  
 Bushire, 2-4  
 Buthurgarh, 139  
 Byahad, 16  
 Calicut, 12  
 Calcutta, 2-4, 11, 71, 171  
 Cape of Good Hope, 11  
 Carnatic, 11, 92, 170  
 Caufield (Captain), 102



- Central India, 85, 90, 94, 173, 176  
 —, Agency, 5, 152  
*Challe*, 160  
 Chambal, 49, 62, 72, 75, 78, 80-2, 102, 129, 134  
 Champaner, 38-9  
 Chandore 68, 82  
 Chapara, 102  
 Chaplin, 162, 164  
*Chauth*, 64  
 Chauragarh, 139  
 Chhatisgarh, 141  
 Chhatra Singh Jat, 44  
 Chiknie Khan, 92  
 Chimnaji Appa, 21, 113, 128  
 China, 73  
 Chinchwad, 29  
 Chintamanrao Patwardhan, 27, 117, 141  
*Chitnavis*, 154-55  
 Chitu Khan, 5, 93-4, 101-04, 131, 141, 145  
 Clarke, Alured (Sir), 1  
 Clarke (General), 10  
 Clare (Major), 103  
 Clive, Edward, 2  
 Close, Barry, 22, 29, 31  
 Collins (Colonel), 29-32, 45  
 Coorg, 12  
 Cornwallis (Lord), 1, 11-2, 71-4, 85  
 Council of the State, 163  
 Court of Directors, 1, 29, 170, 175  
 Court of Jaipur, 84  
 Cownpore, 66-7  
 Dadhu Khan, 126-27  
 Dadra, 78  
*Daftardar*, 154-55  
 Dapuri, 111  
 Darakhbars, 154  
 De Boigne, 11  
 Deccan, 34, 37, 45, 63, 65, 68-9, 91, 104, 114, 116, 134, 156, 162, 165-66  
 —, Army, 5  
 Dein Khan, 92  
 Delhi, 35, 71, 73, 127, 130  
 Deputy Collector, 155  
*Desai*, 154  
 Desai of Kittur, 27  
*Deshmukhs*, 154  
 Deveton (General), 5, 113, 119, 137, 144-48  
 Dewas  
 —, Chief of, 5  
 —, Raja of, 6  
 Dhar, 17  
 —, Chief of, 5  
 —, Raja of, 6  
 Dharallab, 160  
 Dharmaji Kunar, 129  
 Dhodap, 68  
 Dholpur, 36, 44, 72, 74-5  
 Dhondopant Godbole, 19  
 Dhulkot, 113, 145  
*Diwan*, 153-54, 156  
 Doab, 36, 64, 67, 74  
 Dobbie Mehr, 93  
 Dodd, 65  
 Dohad, 38-9  
 Don (Colonel), 66  
 Donkni (Major-General), 102  
 Dost Muhammad, 93-4  
 Duncon, 21  
 Dug, 133  
 Dumfries-shire, 1  
 Dungarpur, 6  
*Durbar*  
 —, Holkar, 126, 128, 130-31  
 —, Indore, 126, 130  
 —, Sindhia, 130  
*Durrah* of Buran, 93-4  
 East India Company, 1, 2, 12, 36,

- 40, 41, 47, 63, 75, 82, 90, 113, 130, 170, 172, 174, 176  
 Edmonstone, 74, 95  
 Edwards, S.M., 85, 159  
 Egypt, 7, 11  
 Ellichpur, 35  
 Elphinstone, 7, 58, 108-12, 117, 119, 121-22, 141, 153, 156, 158, 164-65, 167, 170, 175  
*Enam*, 162  
*Enamdars*, 160-62  
 England, 95  
 Ensign, 1, 10  
 European Regiment, 111  
 Etawa, 64  
 Fakirs, 141, 161  
 Farrukhabad, 67, 69  
 Fatehram, 84  
 Fatehsingh Mane, 19, 28  
 Ford (Captain), 111  
 Fort of Ahmednagar, 36  
   —, Asirgarh, 19, 23, 35, 174  
   —, Broach, 36  
   —, Chandore, 80, 82  
   —, Dohad, 36  
   —, Gavilgarh, 35  
   —, Gwalior, 44-5, 78  
   —, Pawangarh, 36  
   —, Sendhawa, 19  
   —, St. George, 1  
 French, 2, 12  
   —, Cooperation to Tipu Sultan, 11  
   —, Emperor, 3  
   —, Influence, 2, 4, 13  
   —, Invasion, 2  
 Gaikwad, 108  
 Ganesh Khind, 111, 117  
 Gangadhar Shastri, 108, 110, 118  
 Ganpatrao Panse, 27, 114  
 Gardane (General), 3  
 Gardi Khan, 92  
 Garhmandal, 138  
 Gavilgarh, 35  
 Gaze Khan, 92  
 Ghafur Khan, 6, 126, 128  
 Ghatge, 19  
 Ghazi-ud-din, 92  
 Ghorpadi, 111  
 Godavari, 34, 36, 82  
 Godra, 38-9  
 Gohad, 36, 44-8, 50, 78, 171-72  
 Gopal Krishna, 76  
 Gopalrao, 142  
 Gopalrao Bhao, 35  
 Gorakhpur, 119  
 Government of Fort Victoria, 15  
 Governor of Bombay, 22, 152  
   —, Madras, 26  
 Grant, John (Sir), 7  
*Grasias*, 104  
*Grassiahs*, 5  
 Green (Lieutenant), 69  
 Gujarat, 36, 66-7, 73, 152  
 Gulf of Cambay, 14  
*Gunhagari*, 157-58  
 Gungrar, 133  
 Gunye, 131  
 Gwalior, 44-8, 50, 78, 107, 113, 144-46, 171-72  
 Gyaspur, 101  
*Habeas Corpus*, 7  
 Haji Ibrahim Khan, 2  
 Haji Khalil Khan, 2, 21  
 Harauti, 82, 102  
*Harkars*, 159  
*Harki*, 157  
 Harnath Singh, 19  
 Harris, Lord, 1  
 Hastings (Lord), 100, 140, 144, 175  
 Hayet Muhammad Khan, 94  
 Hindia, 94, 131, 134-35  
 Hindon Fort, 67

- Hindustan, 37, 45, 50, 55, 65, 73, 80, 104, 116, 166, 172, 183  
Hingauhat, 95  
Hinglaygarh, 66  
Hislop, Sir Thomas, 97, 101, 131-32  
*History of Persia*, 4  
Hiru, 94  
*Holkar Shahi*, 16, 92-4, 126, 129  
Home Trade, 165  
Hoondeekurrees, 165  
Hoshangabad, 104  
Hoshiarpur, 79  
Hyderabad, 1, 2, 4-5, 11, 97, 101, 109  
Hyder Ali, 1  
Ichalkaranji, 27  
*Illakash*, 48  
*Illayet*, 48  
Imam Baksh, 93-4  
*Inams*, 154  
Indian  
—, princes, 93  
—, States, 93  
Indore, 14, 19, 107, 126, 129, 166  
Infantry  
—, 7th Nagpur, 147  
Innes, Jones (Col.), 4  
Irvine, 91  
Ispahan, 2  
*Istamrar grants*, 161  
Jabbulpur, 139, 144  
Jafarbad, 34  
Jagat Singh, 127  
*Jagir*, 6, 11, 17, 27, 36, 45, 72, 78, 94, 152  
*Jagirdars*, 26-7, 38, 116, 156-57, 160  
Jaipur, 36, 47, 56, 65, 70, 78, 80-1, 83-5, 129  
Jalna, 33  
Jalnapur, 34  
*Jamadar*, 92  
Jamuna, 75  
Jaora, 6  
*Jarip*, 160  
*Jari Patka*, 3  
Jawad, 102  
Jejuri, 16  
Jenkins, Richard, 69-72, 74, 77, 90-1, 95, 121, 137, 139-40  
Jivaji Yashwant, 19  
Jodhpur, 36, 47, 70, 77-8, 100, 142  
Jones (Captain), 141  
Jones, Harford (Sir), 4  
Junnar, 15  
Judicial System, 156  
Kadir Baksh, 93-4  
*Kaifyat*, 16  
Kamalnayan, 46-8, 52-3, 68, 77  
*Kamvisdar*, 153-58, 160  
Karim Khan, 93-4, 102-03  
Karkuns, 145  
Karnatak, 152  
Kashi Bai, 138  
Kashirao, 16-7, 19  
Kashirao Holkar, 64, 126-27  
Kathmandu, 107  
Kennaway, John, 10  
Khairi, 114  
Khande Gobind, 138  
Khande Mahadev, 64  
Khanderao, 64  
Khanderao, Holkar, 17, 19, 23, 33  
Khandesh, 16-7, 36, 100, 112, 118-19, 129, 152, 174  
Kharda, 171  
Khare, 18  
*Khas Saranjam*, 47, 49  
Khira, 94  
Killedar of Asirgarh, 5, 149  
Kirat Singh, 45-8, 52, 55, 57, 59

- Kirkpatrick, W. (Major), 11  
 Kirkee, 111  
 Konch, 134  
 Konday, 146  
 Konkan, 161, 164  
 Konkan Brahmins, 27  
 Koorota, 47  
 Koregaon, 112  
 Kota, 63, 66-7, 71, 100, 129  
 Krishna, 17, 19, 28  
 Krishna Kumari, 127  
 Kuchwagar, 47  
 Kushalgarh, 67  
 Lahorigate, 102  
 Lahore, 107, 142  
 Lali Muhammad, 94  
*Laissez Faire*, 165  
 Lake (General) (Lord) 3, 34-6,  
     45, 49-50, 52-3, 57, 59, 63-8,  
     70-1, 76, 78-80, 82-4  
 Lakheri, 66, 82  
*Lakheraj*, 161  
 Lalki Begum, 102  
 Lasalgaum, 68  
 London, 1, 12  
 Lucknow, 71  
 Ludhiana, 79  
 Macdowell (Major), 109  
 Macdonald (Lieutenant), 114  
 Madhurao Dadaji, 117  
 Madhurao Rastia, 27, 117  
 Madras, 1, 2, 4, 7, 10, 132  
     —, Army, 10  
     —, Cavalry, 147  
 Mahadeo Hills, 139, 141, 144-45  
 Mahad, 15, 21, 29  
 Mahajans, 162  
 Mahals, 158  
*Mahal Shibandi*, 158  
 Mahar, 155  
 Maharaj, 47, 117  
 Maharaja Ali Jah Daulatrao Sin-  
     dhia, 36  
 Maheswar, 16-7, 134-35  
 Mahipatrao, 126-27  
 Mahitpur, 5, 102, 131, 175  
 Mahuli, 97, 109, 112, 117  
 Malaigarh, 148  
 Malkapur, 32-3, 95  
 Malligaum, 119  
 Malet, 12  
*Mamlatdar*, 152-54, 156-58, 164  
 Malwa, 5-6, 17, 34, 37, 50, 66,  
     80-2, 85, 90, 92, 104, 119, 122,  
     152, 154-56, 158-59, 161-66  
 Mandasore, 66, 102, 133, 166  
 Mandu, 135  
 Mangs, 158  
 Man Singh, 127  
 Malharrao Holkar, 16, 92, 94,  
     100, 109, 126, 128-29, 133-34,  
     174  
 Maratha  
     —, *Brahmins*, 155  
     —, *Confederacy*, 14, 19, 26,  
         107, 109, 137  
     —, *Jagirdars*, 159  
     —, *Judicial System*, 156-57  
     —, *Panchayets*, 157-59  
     —, *Population*, 166-67  
     —, *Revenue Administration*,  
         159-64  
     —, *States 1798-1802*, 10-23,  
         176  
     —, *Trade*, 164-66  
     —, *War second*, 63, 85  
     —, *Third*, 5, 85, 90  
 Maratha-Mysore War, 12  
 Marriot, S., 161, 164  
 Marshall, 102  
 Masulipatam, 14  
 Mathura, 36, 67, 71  
 Mazumdar, 154  
 Metha Lal, 84

- Mercer, Graeme, 10, 45, 71  
 Metcalfe, Charles, 130, 149, 170  
 Mewar, 17, 82  
 Midnapur, 76  
 Minto (Lord), 4  
 Miraj, 27, 112, 141  
 Mirzapur, 95  
 Moira, Earl of (Lord), 5, 95,  
     100-01, 107, 110, 129-30, 170,  
     173  
 Monson (Colonel), 66-7, 71  
 Moradabad, 127  
 Moro Dikshit, 111  
 Moro Raghunath's Case, 7  
 Mornington (Lord), 11  
 Mudhoji Bhonsle, 137  
 Muhammad Khan, 129  
 Muhammad Punah, 94, 104, 141,  
     145  
 Mukundara, 66-8  
 Mukhundara Pass, 172  
 Mula, Mutha, 111  
 Munnoo, 94  
 Munro Thomas (Sir), 7, 112, 121,  
     156  
*Munshi*, 10  
*Munshi*, Makhal Lal, 45  
*Munshi* Kamalnayan, 36, 38  
 Murray (Colonel), 66-7  
*Mutalaqi Siqqa*, 153  
 Mutiny  
     —, Madras Army, 4  
     —, Officers at Hyderabad, 4  
 Mysore, 1, 5, 13, 21-2, 28, 71, 97,  
     132  
     —, Government, 14  
 Nagpur, 14, 16, 64, 93, 98, 107,  
     121, 137-41, 144, 147, 157  
     —, Raja Appasaheb, 108  
     —, States, 176  
 Nagarkot, 79  
*Naiks*, 158  
*Nakar* land, 161  
 Namdar Khan, 103  
 Nana Phadnavis, 15-6  
 Nandurbar, 17  
 Napoleon, 3, 11  
 Napoleonic War, 71  
 Narmada, 17-8, 99, 102, 117, 129,  
     131, 141  
     —, region, 94  
 Naropant, 35  
 Naro Vishnu Apte, 112  
 Natepota, 108 • •  
 Navyadish, 156  
 Nawab of Bhopal, 94, 98  
     —, of Jaora, 6  
*Nawab Kamal Muhammad Mustoo*  
     *Karim Jang*, 93  
*Nazarana*, 31  
*Nazars*, 162  
 Nazim-ud-din, 103  
 Nerbudda, 92, 99  
 Nimbaji Bhaskar, 20  
 Nipani, 27, 31  
 Nizam, 2, 10, 33, 36, 97  
 Nusroo, 92  
 Nuthooh, 94  
 Ochterlony, David (Sir), 67, 113,  
     121  
 Oudh, 2, 11, 67, 170  
*Pagota*, 158  
 Paithan, 33  
*Palpati* tax, 91  
*Panchayet*, 153, 155, 157-58  
 Pandhar, 91  
 Pandharpur, 18, 28, 108-09, 112  
 Pandurang Baburao, 27  
 Pandurang Ramchandra, 7  
 Panipat, 44  
 Paperthun, 101  
 Parashar Dadaji, 19  
 Parenda, 109  
*Pargana*, 133, 154, 159

- Parshuram Bhao, 117  
 Parshuram Pandit Pratinidhi, 27  
 Parvati hill, 21  
 Pasley, Charles W., 2  
 Pasley, John, 1  
*Patchur*, 133  
 Pathan, 90, 173  
     —, Chief, 131  
 Patiala, 78-9  
 Patil, 154-60, 164  
 Patnavis, 154-55  
 Patwardhans, 27-8, 31, 69, 117, 156  
 Pauni, 95  
 Pawar, 5, 152  
 Pentu Ali, 128  
 Perron, 11, 45  
 Persia, 1, 2, 4  
     —, French influence, 3  
     —, Russian influence, 3  
     —, Shah of, 4  
 Persian  
     —, Ambassador, 21  
     —, Court, 2-3  
     —, Gulf, 2, 4  
     —, Island of Anjan, 2  
     —, Island of Kharg, 2  
     —, Island of Kishni, 2  
     —, Language, 38  
 Peshwa Savai Madhavrao, 14  
 Peshwa *darbar*, 3  
 Peter (General), 4  
 Phadnavis, 152, 156, 163  
 Phatak, 65  
 Pindari, 35, 38, 69, 85, 91-3, 95, 98, 100-02, 107, 110, 129, 138, 144-45, 152, 173-75  
     —, their centre of activities, 90  
     —, ancestors, 91  
     —, auxiliary force, 91  
     —, counterbalanced the British, 93  
     —, founder, 92  
     —, free-booters, 90-1  
     —, leaders, 93  
     —, life of debauchery, 92  
     —, indiscriminate looting, 91  
     —, their origin, 90, 104, 107, 144  
     —, strengthened themselves, 93  
     —, war, 5, 97  
 Pindari Power  
     —, *Holkar Shahi*, 92  
     —, *Sindhia Shahi*, 92  
 Pindarraha, 90  
 Pitt's India Act of 1784, 12-3  
 Poona, 2-3, 5, 14-23, 28-30, 37, 97, 108-09, 111-12, 115, 117, 119, 130-31, 144, 152, 154, 156, 158, 165  
     —, *Durbar*, 31  
     —, Government, 27  
 Popham (Major), 44  
 Portuguese troops, 69  
 Prendergast, 162  
 Pritzler, 112  
 Punjab, 142  
 Purandar, 109  
 Pursoji Bhonsle, 137-38  
 Pusaita, 161-62  
 Pusesavli, 112  
 Pushkar, 65  
 Quarter-Master-General, 91  
 Quit rent, 161  
 Raghunathrao, 14, 175  
 Raghuji Bhonsle, 15-6, 19-20, 32-3, 36, 63, 76, 93, 137  
 Raghunath, 31  
 Rahatgarh, 138  
 Raigarh, 15, 20, 109  
 Raja of  
     —, Berar, 11, 13, 35  
     —, Bharatpur, 74, 76, 78  
     —, Jaipur, 37, 45-7, 49, 53, 65,

- 72, 74-5, 78, 83-4, 101, 126-27  
 —, Jodhpur, 37, 45-7, 49, 53, 64, 84, 127  
 —, Kolhapur, 26-7, 68, 118  
 —, Kota, 72  
 —, Nagpur, 29-30, 68, 98, 104, 127  
 —, Machedi, 64, 74  
 —, Patiala, 79  
 —, Satara, 112, 159  
 —, Travancore, 12  
 Rajasthan, 173  
*Rajinama*, 157  
 Rajkheda, 36, 72, 74-5  
 Rajputana, 85, 126-28, 165  
 Rajput States, 85, 90, 173  
 Rajun, 103  
 Ramchandra Appa, 27, 31  
 Ramdin, 114  
 Rampura, 65-7, 134, 174  
*Ramoshis*, 158  
*Ram Shastri*, 156  
 Rana of Gohad, 37, 44, 47-50, 53, 56, 74, 78, 172  
 —, Udaipur, 101, 127  
 Rana Kirat Singh, 46, 50  
 Ranjit Singh, 68, 76, 79-80, 107, 142, 171  
 Ranoji Sindhia, 92  
 Rao Saheb, 118  
*Rasad*, 153  
 Rastias, 27  
 Ratlam, 6, 63  
 Regiments  
 —, 30th, 147  
 —, 67th, 147  
 Resident at  
 —, Bushire, 3  
 —, Delhi, 84  
 —, Hyderabad, 26, 171  
 —, Mysore, 3-4, 26, 33  
 —, Nagpur, 29, 90  
 —, Poona, 22, 29  
 —, to the Court of Sindhia, 44  
 Revenue Administration, 159-64  
 Robert (Captain), 102  
 Rohilkhand, 74, 127  
 Rohilla, 90, 116  
 Royal Scots, 147  
 Rushan Beg, 134  
 Rushan Khan, 134  
 Ryan, 65  
*Ryot*, 160-61  
 Sabalgarh, 70  
 Sadashivrao Phadke, 31  
 Sadat Ali, 11  
 Sadri, 102  
 Saheb Khan, 93-4  
*Sahukars*, 162, 166  
 Sailana, 6  
 Sakardara, 139  
*Salami*, 159  
*Sanskrit treatises*, 156  
*Saranjam*, 157  
 —, lands, 19  
*Saransha*, 157  
 Sardesai, 45  
*Sar Laskar*, 31  
*Sardar Waridpath*, 153  
*Sar Subhedar*, 152-54, 156  
*Sarkar*, 153, 159  
 Satpura range, 133, 147  
 Satola, 102  
 Satvas, 18, 94  
 Savai Madhavrao, 34  
 Savanaur, 31  
 Saugor, 148  
 Scoh (Colonel), 132  
 Seagham, 82  
 Secret Committee, 95, 97, 110, 134  
 Secretary of State, 155  
 Sepoys  
 —, Bombay, 147

- , Madras, 147
- Seranjamy, 37
- Seringapattam, 1, 12, 14
- Sethi Mahajan*, 157
- Shadhorwrah, 94
- Shah of Afghanistan, 68
  - , Kabul, 107
- Shah Alam II, 36, 73
- Shahbaz Khan, 92
- Shahji, 92
- Shahmat Khan, 19, 76, 103
- Shahu, 92
- Shalsabad, 102
- Shame, Merrick, 30, 32-3, 39, 53, 57, 73
- Sharzarao Ghatge, 18-9, 33, 68-9, 76, 82
- Sharzarao Nimbalkar, 148
- Sheik, Habibullah, 80-1
- Sheik, Hussain, 103
- Shela*, 158
- Sheoprasad, 139-40
- Sher Khan, 94
- Sheri, 159
- Sherni*, 157
- Shetasandi*, 158
- Shibandi*, 154
- Shinde, 139
- Shiraz, 4
- Shirgarh, 102
- Shivni, 112
- Shore, John, 11-3
- Shrimant*, 117, 145
- Shuja-ul-Mulk, 80
- Siccanavis, 154-55
- Sikh, 78
  - , Chieftains, 79-80
  - , Religion, 79
- Sindhi, 116
- Sindhia
  - , durbar, 3, 32, 39
  - , *Shahi*, 92-4
- Sinhagarh, 20-1, 109
- Sipra river, 131
- Sirkwar, 47
- Sir Punnah*, 157
- Sirur, 111-12
- Sitalbari, 94
- Sitamaui, 6
- Sivaji, 92
- Sobharam, 129
- Sondwara, 134
- Smith (Captain), 127
- Smith (Colonel), 109, 112
- Staunton (Captain), 112
- Sri Markanda*, 16
- Stevenson (Colonel), 158
- Steward, 103
- Stewart (Captain), 145
- Stuart (Lieutenant-General), 26, 69
- Sturrock (Captain), 84
- Subhedar Kashirao, 16
- Subsidiary
  - , Alliance, 12-3, 34, 40, 71, 74, 170
  - , Force, 38-40
  - , Policy, 75
  - , Treaty, 21, 41, 65, 137
- Sudras*, 166
- Sukharam Punt, 108, 139
- Sultanpur, 17
- Sunnud*, 38, 41
- Supreme Court of Bombay, 7
- Suranj, 138
- Sutlej, 79
- Suvarnadurg, 22
- Swadharma*, 33, 64, 70
- Swaraj, 33, 64, 70
- Sydenham, 92
- Syed Hussain, 104
- Syed Ibrahim, 132
- Tajpur, 131
- Talegaon, 92, 112
- Talem, 102, 130



- Taluks*, 158  
 Tapasnavis, 159  
 Tantiã Jogh, 133-34  
 Tapti, 80-1  
*Taulkdars*, 154  
 Teheran, 2, 4  
 Thackeray, 161  
 Thalner, 19  
 Thana, 108  
 Tipu Sultan, 1, 10-14, 21, 93, 171  
 Tod, 90, 92  
 Tod (Captain), 130  
 Tonk, 6  
 Tonk, Rampura, 75, 80-2, 100, 174  
 Travancore, 12  
 Treaty of  
   —, Bassein, 22, 26, 29, 32, 70, 107, 174  
   —, Burhanpur, 39-40  
   —, Devgaon, 36, 63, 137  
   —, Gwalior, 100, 144, 174  
   —, January 29, 1804, 57  
   —, Mandasor, 5  
   —, Mangalore, 10  
   —, Mustafapur, 3, 78, 63-85  
   —, Peace, 49-50, 52, 56, 72-3, 76  
   —, Poona, 109-10, 175  
   —, Rajghat, 3, 63-85, 90, 101, 126  
   —, Salbar, 30  
   —, Seringapattam, 12  
   —, Subsidiary Alliance, 29, 41  
   —, Surji Anjangaon, 3, 36-7, 40, 46, 63, 74, 78  
 Trimbakji, 164  
 Trimbakji Denglia, 108-09, 114-15, 118  
 Trimbakrao Raghunath, 27  
 Tukoji, 6, 127  
 Tukoji Holkar, 13-6  
 Tulajpur, 109
- Tulput*, 159  
 Tulsi Bai, 100, 126, 128-29, 131  
 Tungabhadra, 14, 28  
 Turki, 92  
 Udaipur, 63, 100, 128-29  
 Ujjain, 5, 14, 17-9, 63, 67, 69, 102, 131, 134, 141, 166  
 Umdut-ul-Umrah, 11  
*Vaita*, 160  
*Vakils*, 36, 40, 80-1, 84  
 Vanghan (Captain), 114  
 Vellore, 92  
 Venkatrao, 27  
*Veras*, 160  
 Viceroy of Fars, 4  
 Vickars (Captain), 65  
 Vinchukar, 117-18  
 Vithal Pant Bakshi, 35  
 Vithoba, 108  
 Vithoji, 16-8  
 Vithoji Nark, 111  
 Wadgaon, 21  
 Wanavdi, 21  
 Wahed Ali Bangash, 76  
 Warden, 161  
 Wasil Kumar, 102  
 Wasil Muhammad, 101-02  
*Watandars*, 161  
 Watans (General), 147, 154  
 Webbe, Joseph, 3, 44, 69  
 Wellesley, Arthur, 1, 3, 14, 28, 30-3, 35-7, 40-1, 44, 46, 48-50, 52-3, 58, 65, 171  
 Wellesley, Henry, 52  
 Wellesley, Lord, 1-3, 11-3, 21, 29, 56-9, 64-5, 72-4, 171-73  
 Wellesley (Major-General), 26-8, 31-5, 37, 55, 66, 71  
 Wellesley School, 4  
 Western Ghat, 21  
 Westerkirk Parish School, 1  
 White (Colonel), 45

- Wise (Doctor), 69  
Yamuna, 44, 55, 67, 74-6, 83  
Yamuna Bhao, 128  
Yashwantrao Bhao, 5, 102, 118,  
121, 126, 141, 144-49  
Yashwantrao Ghorepade, 37, 47  
Yodi, 161  
Yodi Watan, 161  
*Zakat*, 165  
Zalim Singh, 101, 103, 133  
Zaman Shah of Kabul, 2, 11  
*Zamindars*, 159-62  
Zunjar Naik Bhil, 17